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ABSTRACT

This collection of 10 "Write Partner" newsletters presents articles and other materials that help seniors ("Senior Partners") to use their experience and good will to write to children ("Junior Partners") and to assure the children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. Each issue in the collection presents a thematic article (on such issues as the seasons, holidays, love of language, freehand drawing, and field trips), sample letters from Senior Partners to children, descriptions of "Very Important Partners," book reviews, and word games that Senior Partners can exchange with their Junior Partners. (RS)

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THE WRITE PARTNER : Senior Partners in Education

January - December 1996

Edited by Joyce McMahan Cookman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The Family Literacy Center
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana
March 1997

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 21 / JANUARY 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Observations of winter

Stop, look, listen and share

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

Winter brings some unique opportunities at my house. I live in central Indiana where snow covers the landscape from time to time. More than any other time of the year I enjoy looking out my window after the snow has fallen. I have more to observe, it seems, when the ground and the trees are covered with snow than during any other season.

By looking across my backyard into a clump of trees, I can tell who has been walking there during the night. Over time, I have learned to recognize the tracks of dogs, raccoon, opossum, deer, and of course birds. Many mornings after a snow, I see that they have all been in my yard before I came to the window to greet the new day. That's when I wish that one of my grandchildren could stand there with me so I could teach them to observe the tracks and to speculate about what those animals were doing in my yard while I slept.

Seven-year-old Brian Smiley of Spencer, Indiana, enjoys feeding the birds in winter and watching their activity.

In the clump of trees

Please see page 2

Winter observations

that separates me from my neighbor, I can watch the large blackbirds that have piled up a huge nest high up in the tree tops. They fuss around that nest and call to each other in their raucous, caw-caw voices. I often wonder what they are communicating as they yell at each other and occasionally swoop to the ground to inspect something in my backyard. I need to watch more carefully to see if there is any pattern to their yells and to their romps in the snow.

The winter also reveals the trees and the landform around me to show me shapes and contours that I would find hard to imagine in the spring and summer when the trees and the grass are filled out completely. Then I can't see my neighbor's house. And I cannot see the wash on one side of my yard where the deer and the raccoon scramble up from a creek about 250 below the level of my yard. Some mornings I am lucky enough to see deer picking their way up the wash from the creek, coming to my yard to see if there are any apples left on my apple tree.

I marvel at the variety of structures I see in the bare trees, and I cheer them for their strength when the winter winds push at them trying to knock them over. Rarely does the wind win the contest.

On a snow-covered morning, I look out my window and ask: "What is different today? What can I learn today?" That's when I wish one of my grandchildren were here—to observe and to learn with me.

With the simplest direction we can turn children into observers. With the easiest of suggestions we can turn their observations into learning. Pass it on.

Observation can also be a ritual, as in the observation of Presidents Day or the observation of a feast day. When I look out my window on a snowy morning, I stand in awe while I also seek to learn.

THE Write Partner

Senior Partners in Education is a program of the Family Literacy Center at Indiana University. Senior Partners uses the experience and good will of seniors to assure children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. The Family Literacy Center is a non-profit organization.

Director: Dr. Carl B. Smith

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For more information, phone (800) 759-4723 or write us at **Senior Partners in Education**

Family Literacy Center
2805 East 10th St., Suite # 150
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Letters to Children

AGES 3–5

Dear J. D.,

Here's a drawing of some tracks I saw in the snow this morning. I think they belong to a squirrel. What do you think? Have you seen any tracks in the snow? Send me a drawing of your discoveries. *Your Senior Partner*

Dear Jillian,

You asked in your letter if I had any brothers and sisters. I have a brother, Jim, and two sisters, Janet and Joyce. As you know, my first name is Judy. Did I mention my mother's name is Jean and my dad's name is Jesse? So don't you think it's great that I got you, Jillian, for my Junior Partner?

Your Senior Partner

AGES 6–8

Dear Alex,

Thanks for telling me about your geography report on the Bushmen of the Kalahari. I learned a lot from you! Your letter made me notice this newspaper article I'm sending. I wouldn't have read it if you hadn't written about the Bushmen. The article makes me sad, because it reports that the Bushmen are being turned into tourist attractions. I thought you would like to read it though, because I know you are concerned about the Bushmen. I am glad you care about people from other countries. *Your Senior Partner*

AGES 9–12

Dear Victoria,

Thanks for your letter describing your soccer games. You painted a real "word picture" of the action for me. I thought I would try to paint one for you about our weather and answer your questions about our dog at the same time.

Rose is part Labrador retriever. If you look up Labrador on a globe you'll find it in northeastern Canada. Well, Rose is definitely a cold weather dog. In the summer she lies around and pants a lot. But cold and snow bring out her Arctic heritage.

When we go outside, she whirls around and leaps up in the air and turns all frisky like a puppy. When we walk in a nearby meadow, she races like the wind. But our recent snow was a foot deep—up to her chest. So instead of running, she moved like a porpoise. She leaped out of the snow, dived back down, leaped up, dived back.

When she's out in the snow she never acts tired and never wants to go home. But even though she thinks she's still a puppy, Rose is nine years old. When she gets home, she naps for the rest of the day.

As you requested, in my next letter, I'll send you a picture of Rose—napping no doubt!

Your Senior Partner

Very Important PartnerS

Michigan students connect on the Net

By Joyce McMahan Cookman
Write Partner Editor

Though not old enough to drive, some of Julia Wasiluk's fifth grade students are on the highway—the information highway. About half of her Carpenter Elementary School students in Lake Orion, Michigan are corresponding with their Senior Partners via computer on the Internet. The remainder of the class eagerly awaits a match up and Mrs. Wasiluk relishes her role as the "driver education" instructor.

"I decided to use the Internet for pen-pals after reading an article in a professional magazine about another Michigan teacher who had students interview seniors via the Internet and write biographies about them," Wasiluk explained. She originally sought out seniors in the Lake Orion area but did not receive any responses.

On the Cutting Edge

"I wanted my students to correspond on-line because I feel this is the cutting edge of technology," Wasiluk said. Initially Wasiluk had anticipated that her students would have access to that on-line technology at their school, although it has yet to happen. When she realized the school would not be networked by September, she began utilizing her own home computer connection. The school connection was again promised by late November but still has not occurred. However recent deliveries to Wasiluk's classroom portend of great things to come.

"We just received Power PCs and color printers for each room, laser printers, a scanner and special camera which transmits pictures directly to the computer. The modem should be next," Wasiluk said hopefully.

More Excitement to Come

In the meantime the students are writing their own letters and Wasiluk types and sends them from her home. She prints out the responses and takes them to school. "The students love this pen-pal program, but it will be even more exciting to them when they get to enter the computer and respond on their own," Wasiluk acknowledges. She also added that some students opt for mailing their letters so they may send artwork or photos to the Senior Partners.

"Lake Orion is building a new school to open next fall which will be technology-based," Wasiluk said. "Students will have lots of access to computers, modems, and CD Roms because the emphasis will be on self-chosen projects which use technology. On-line partnerships (such as those shared through Senior Partners) will be the norm," Wasiluk predicted.

"It is an exciting time," Wasiluk said, in describing the use of technology in communicating. "Almost all the barriers of time and location are gone. We can correspond to anyone in the world instantaneously."

Benefits for All

Wasiluk also described some of the many benefits her students derive from the technology.

"I have what's known as a full-inclusion classroom," she said, "which means that special education and learning disabled students remain in the class at all times. Many of these students have trouble with verbal and written communication. Written work is often a chore for them. Computers provide a way to deal with writing difficulties."

Even students who are reluctant readers or writers, will upon receiving a letter, sit down to read their letters and respond immediately," Wasiluk said. "They also get out atlases to find places mentioned by their Partners."

Awaiting Mr. Brownstone's Return

"Mr. Brownstone should be returning from Japan shortly," Wasiluk's student Terry told her last week, speaking of his Senior Partner. "I can't wait to ask him how it was."

"The students have an interested audience for their thoughts and a genuine purpose for writing," Wasiluk observed. "When Jeremy writes to his Senior Partner, Jane Early, he describes science experiments we have done, but writes more and adds more details than he does for class assignments!"

"It really makes me happy to see these kids so motivated to express their ideas," Wasiluk concluded at the end of this interview, conducted, by the way, via the Internet.

To become a **Senior Partner** or to **order** publications
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We accept check, money order, VISA, MasterCard or purchase order number. For publication orders, please add 10% for packing and delivery.

BOOK CORNER

The Family Literacy Center does not sell the books mentioned in Book Corner, but in response to an inquiry from Senior Partner Jeanne Culbertson of Las Cruces, N.M., you'll now see the prices of these books listed. Check your public library or favorite bookstore for these and other books for wintertime reading.

FOR AGES 3 AND UP:

A Winter Walk

By Lynne Barasch, Ticknor & Fields, New York, 1993, $13.95.

One cold day, the world outside Sophie's window looks so gray that she feels cold and gray too. Then she and her mother go for a winter walk, and as they look closely, the world reveals itself to be full of color.

FOR AGES 5 AND UP:

Tales For a Winter's Eve

By Wendy Watson, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1988, $10.95.

Poor Freddie Fox. He's hurt himself skiing and must make his way home in the dark. But once there, Mama Fox has dinner waiting and other relatives and friends make him feel better by each entertaining him with a special tale. This story is perfect for reading aloud at bedtime.

FOR AGES 9 AND UP:

A Chartreuse Leotard in a Magenta Limousine:

(And Other Words Named After People and Places)

By Lynda Graham-Barber; Illustrations by Barbara Lehman, Hyperion Books, New York, 1994, $14.95.

We observe things like jeans, hamburgers or shopping malls all the time. Do we stop to think why they have those names? This book of toponyms—words that are named after a place, and eponyms—words named after a person, will provide readers with humorous and informative explanations of over 150 words.

FOR AGES 12 AND UP:

Susan Butcher And The Iditarod Trail

By Ellen M. Dolan, Walker and Company, New York, 1993, $15.85.

This book describes the annual dog sled race from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska, and the life of the woman who was the first person to win it for three consecutive years. The Iditarod race has its origins in the efforts of mushers to deliver life-saving diptheria medicine to children. The current film, *Balto*, draws its story from this heroic deed. As we went to press, Alaska was reporting a shortage of snow, raising the possibility the Iditarod and other sled races might have to be cancelled this year.

Books to share

Because this issue describes a classroom using computer technology to link Junior and Senior Partners, we are again mentioning our publication, *The Online Classroom.* See page 5 to order any of the books described below.

The Online Classroom: Teaching with the Internet

By Eileen G. Cotton
Softcover, 8 1/2" x 11", $22.95
Order number: A3-104-1561

Written by a teacher for other teachers, this book can also be used by parents, guiding all in the use of the Internet. The book is designed to save many hours of wandering in virtual space and offers a vast array of sample lessons of varying levels of sophistication. All you need to get started is a computer and a connection to the Internet. This guide gives you the rest, including hundreds of Internet addresses.

How to Help Your Child with Homework/ Every Caring Parent's Guide to Encouraging Good Study Habits and Ending the Homework Wars

By Marguerite C. Radencich, Ph.D. and Jeanne Shay Schumm, Ph.D.
Softcover, 7" x 9", $12.95
Order number: A3-103-1518

This book offers strategies and techniques for parents to help their children succeed in school, and makes homework more bearable, if not downright pleasant, for everyone involved. Parents learn how to initiate homework schedules, establish a home study center, and communicate effectively with teachers. The book explains how to assist with subjects from math to foreign languages, and develop skills for writing reports and taking tests. Grades 1-8.

What Kids Need to Succeed/ Proven Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids

By Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., Judy Galbraith, M.A., and Pamela Espeland
Softcover, 4 1/8" x 6 7/8", $4.99
Order number: A3-103-1520.

Here's a book which offers parents and community leaders practical, proven ways to raise caring, contributing, healthy, happy kids who will carry those positive attributes with them into adulthood. Based on a study of more than 270,000 young people in 600 communities across the nation, this book identifies 30 "developmental assets" which help young people thrive, while avoiding risky behaviors that are known to limit psychological, physical and economic well-being in adolescence and adulthood. Includes special tips for teens. Grades 6-12.

Word Play

Everybody talks about the weather but... do they know what they're talking about? Here are some definitions of weather-related words. Which ones do you think are correct?

Nor'easter:

a. A storm, strong wind, or gale coming from the northeast

b. A springtime storm occurring on Easter Sunday

Fahrenheit:

a. Relating to a thermometric scale which under standard atmospheric pressure water boils at 212 degrees and freezes at 32 degrees. Named for physicist Gabriel Fahrenheit.

b. Relating to a thermometric scale under which water boils at 100 degrees and freezes at 0. Named for astronomer Anders Fahrenheit.

Eye of the hurricane:

a. Center of a tropical storm marked by light winds or complete calm

b. Device used to watch a tropical storm

El Nino:

a. Nickname for the Number 9 subway snow plow train in Chicago. Spanish for "The Nine".

b. Nickname for a wind pattern flowing west to east, strongly influencing world weather patterns. Spanish for "The Child".

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 22 / FEBRUARY 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Affectionately yours

Love of words, Words of love

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

Bloomington (Ind.) Montessori School student Sam Bowling looks through the "chink in the wall" provided by Kraig Kinser, as they perform the play within the play of William Shakespeare's romantic comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Once while walking down a school hallway, I saw this little guy skipping along and reciting rhythmically, "Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin." The sound of that word tasted so good that he just wanted to say it over and over. It was like eating ice cream.

Kids love words—new words, funny words, long words, words of love. They use them in their jump-rope games, in their quiet moments, in their silly hours.

The nineteenth century author, Edward Lear, became famous for his children's books of nonsense verse:

"There was an old man in a tree,

Who was horribly bored by a bee."

(from Book of Nonsense)

Please see page 2

Sharing love of words, words of love

Lear's verse didn't have to make much sense because children could giggle at the silly images, and they savored the rhythmic patterns of the verse. I wonder if today's fascination with dinosaurs isn't related to children's interest in the large, strange-sounding names of brontosaurus, pterodactyl, tyrannosaurus rex.

Conversely, let us consider some other powerful words, not ones conveying images of physical strength but ones of emotional strength. Is there anything more powerful than, "I love you?" Words of endearment or friendship cause all of us to relax and to become attached to the speaker.

An older comedian was talking about his recent marriage:

"I just got married. She tricked me."

"Tricked you?"

"Yeah, she said that she liked me."

The audience snickered a bit, but he had actually uttered an enduring truth:

When someone says that we are important, we will do almost anything for that person.

When we write to kids, we need to find ways to communicate to them that they are valuable, that they have a future, that someone supports them. Primarily we use words to express that powerful message of reassurance and friendship.

"I enjoyed your letter."

"You must have looked terrific in the school play."

"I laughed out loud at the joke that you sent in your letter."

"Your parents (teachers, friends) must be very proud of you, and so am I."

"Here's a book (small gift) to celebrate your good grades."

You might also use special words as a way of telling your pen pal that you appreciate who they are.

"I think I will wear some perfume today to celebrate the good deed that you did. Thousands of years ago,

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people would burn flowers on special occasions to create a lovely smell. The word perfume means 'through the smoke,' (Latin: per fumus) indicating that the aroma of the flowers came through the smoke. It is similar to burning incense."

Words of love and friendship naturally come to mind around Valentine's Day. It might be a good time to say, "You are special. I like what you do. Your letters are a flower in my month. Fondly." And so on.

While we are thinking about it, I want to remind you that you are special for what you are doing in writing to young people. You may never know fully how important your words are to your pen pal, but I am sure that they will be remembered fondly. Thank you for being a caring person.

Books to share

Explore the wonders of the English language with your Junior Partner or for your own knowledge, using these books. Call **800-759-4723,** Fax **812-855-4220**, E-mail **jcookman@indiana.edu** or Write **The Family Literacy Center** at 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 to order.

Word History: A Guide to Understanding the English Language

By Carl B. Smith and Eugene Reade
Softcover, 6" x 9". $12.95
Order number: A3-104-1241

Word History: A Resource Book for the Teacher

By Carl B. Smith and Eugene Reade
Softcover, 6" x 9". $12.95
Order number: A3-104-1268

This set puts the curiosity, quirkiness, fun and aggravation of the history of English at your fingertips so that families or students in the classroom can actually see where English came from. In no time, students will be writing Anglo-Saxon and Middle-English phrases, grasping the complexity of spelling in terms of loanwords, and savoring the layer cake of language that English is. One doesn't really become literate until one understands the language from the inside out. Families can use the Guide for reference; teachers can use both the Guide and the Resource Book for class activities.

Prithee, dost thou knowest another who might be a goodly Senior Partner? If it be so, please tell such personage to get thee to a telephone or computer and contact Joyce McMahan Cookman, post haste!

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Very Important PartnerS

Heart and mind unite in Senior's poems

By Joyce McMahan Cookman
Write Partner Editor

A few weeks ago I enjoyed a telephone conversation with Senior Partner Eva Bookman. Eva is one of four dedicated Senior Partners who reside at The Jewish Towers in Atlanta, Georgia.

Eva said that at age 86, "My legs don't work so well any more but I like to still keep my hands busy." She went on to mention several activities which kept her hands and mind active. In addition to writing her Junior Partners in Collinsville,Ill. and Oyster Bay, N.Y., she said she liked to paint, create ceramics, and compose poetry.

The next day I wrote her a letter. Would she send some of her poetry to use in *The Write Partner*? She not only sent me some wonderful poems, I received some of her artwork too!

Accompanying the poems was some background information regarding how Eva came to write the particular poems. There's a touching story behind the writing of the poem, "Sharon's Yesterday's House".

Eva wrote this poem 27 years ago when her granddaughter, Sharon, was two years old. Eva's daughter, son-in-law and Sharon lived in Connecticut. It was during the Viet Nam war and her son-in-law was called up to report to Ft. Ord, California. The family immediately packed their scant belongings and Sharon and off they went.

"They called each night to let us know their stopover city," Eva recalled. "When I inquired about Sharon and how she was taking the trip her mother replied, 'Poor Sharon continues to cry for her yesterday's house'." After that, Eva said, "I couldn't sleep. I got out of bed and wrote this poem."

Sharon's "Yesterday's House"
by Eva Bookman

What do you say to a child of two
About "Yesterday's House" she loved and knew—
Which won't be there tomorrow?

"Yesterday's House" filled with her toys;
Surrounded by happy little girls and boys.

"Yesterday's House" —Wasn't big
—Nor was it small
In fact—you can't describe it at all.

But "Yesterday's House" was so warm and sweet —
It was the place Cinderella and Snow White
did meet.

"Macaroni" had his very own stall
Sugar Plums and Fairies danced on the wall.

Her dreams of tomorrow were found in her books

Her own precious secrets safely tucked in the
nooks
of— "Yesterday's House."

This darling child will be big some day
AND THEN she'll understand why

"YESTERDAY'S HOUSE" was taken away.

A second poem by Eva was dated June 15, 1975 and was written upon the occasion of her turning 65. Though over 20 years have gone by since she wrote "Age—65", and she's enjoyed a few more birthdays, one suspects her poem still expresses her attitude toward life.

AGE - 65

by Eva Bookman

There may be those
who whisper and say
"She's old, she's fat
and so very gray."
But I don't feel older
than the day before
When I was a spry, active
sixty-four.

No—I don't intend to sit
and grow old,
I'm going to carve
another mold
And Cram into it joys
galore
I'll look *forward*
not back to sixty-four.

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BOOK CORNER

It's impossible to review all the terrific books of poetry available at the library and in bookstores but here's a small sampling. While browsing for poetry books, look for some how-to books on writing poetry in all its different forms, too.

FOR AGES 3 AND UP:

Animal Poems

Compiled by Polly Richardson, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., Hauppauge, N.Y., 1992, $12.95.

Here are 25 short, simple and delightful poems featuring all kinds of animals. Some are agile like the squirrel, "Whisky Frisky"; other are playful as "Pussy Pussy Puddle Cat." The little ones and the animal lovers will enjoy this collection.

FOR AGES 5 AND UP:

My Song Is Beautiful Poems and Pictures in Many Voices

Selected by Mary Ann Hoberman, Little Brown and Co., Boston, 1994, $15.95.

Fourteen simple yet resonant poems, each written in the first person, celebrate the power of childhood from the perspectives of a rich variety of cultures. Echoing the diversity of the poets' voices, each illustration has been created in a different technique, such as wood-block carving, silk screen, watercolor and painted fabric. Writers range from African-American writer Nikki Giovanni to England's A.A. Milne (of "Winnie the Pooh" fame).

FOR AGES 9 AND UP:

The Dragons Are Singing Tonight

By Jack Prelutsky, Greenwillow Books, New York, 1993, $15.00

A collection of poems about dragons, including a personal favorite, "A Dragon Is in My Computer." Other highly recommended books by this author are *Something Big Has Been Here* and *The New Kid on the Block*. Mr. Prelutsky writes poetry for kids of all ages.

FOR AGES 12 AND UP:

The Dream Keeper and other poems

By Langston Hughes, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1994, $12.00

First published in 1932, this collection introduces students to the lyrical beauty of Hughes' poetry. It seems Hughes' writing is most often recalled in February during Black History Month but his is a voice that should be studied year round, for both his content and his style.

Letters to Children

Since Valentine's Day shows up in mid-February, why not use it as an occasion for sending words of friendship? You may even want to send a Valentine as a separate reminder that you care about your pen pal.

AGES 3–5

Dear Julie,

Valentine's Day makes me think of the special people in my life. You are one of those special friends. As you grow bigger, I want you to remember how important you are.

Would you draw me a Valentine, please?

Your Senior Partner

AGES 6—8

Dear Jeff,

Do you and your friends exchange Valentines? isn't it great to let people know that you like them? I enjoy sending cards to the people that I like. You are one of those people.

You can also show your friends that you like them by doing something nice for them. Maybe you will want to do something special for someone in your family.

What are some things that you like to do to show your family or your friends that you like them? I'll look forward to your letter.

Your Senior Partner

AGES 9–12

Dear Joy,

Your last letter was fun to read. I have decided that you are a very nice person. You lift my spirits just by writing me letters.

Some people may want candy or flowers as signs that they are loved. I am actually more pleased with a card or letter. I guess I just need someone to tell me that I am okay, that they like me. Then I feel happy.

How about your friends? Do you think they are pleased just to get a note from you? Or do they need some kind of gift to know that they are valuable? *Your Senior Partner*

AGES 13-16

Dear Justin,

Last night I went bowling with a friend of mine. He always wins because I am not a good bowler. He likes bowling, and that is the reason I go along—I want to show my friendship by doing something that he likes.

Sometimes my friend and I take long walks and we just talk and laugh about any old thing. I like to talk about books I read. He likes to talk about jokes he has heard. We have a great time together.

I guess most friendships are like that. Naturally we try to do things we both like. But we also try to do things that please our friends—just to show we like them. What do you and your friends do together?

Your Senior Partner,

Word Play

What's love got to do with it? Identify the source—musician, poet, writer, or artist—associated with these words. Exchange these puzzlers with your Junior Partner.

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's amore!"

"My cherie, amour..."

"If music be the food of love, play on!"

The original LOVE postage stamp

"I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn..."

"All you need is love..."

"And the greatest of these is love..."

Answers:
Musician: Dean Martin
Musician: Stevie Wonder
Writer: William Shakespeare
Artist: Robert Indiana
Poet: Langston Hughes
Musicians: The Beatles
Book: Paul, in the Bible, ch. 13 Corinthians

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ISSUE 23 / MARCH 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

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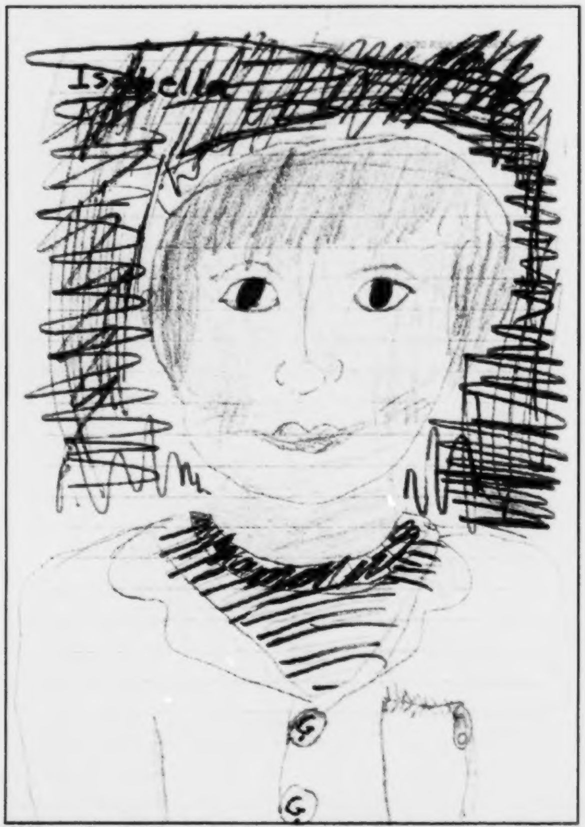
Drawing to communicate



When Isabella told her Senior Partner she liked to draw, he asked her if she would send him some of her work and this self-portrait was her response. The young artist is a third grader in Leah Finch's class at the French-American International School in San Francisco.

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

My four-year-old granddaughter just sent me a picture of Cinderella in her ball gown—not white, but pink and blue and maroon. It was signed simply, "Love, Nicole." She had colored the picture from an old-fashioned coloring book after hearing the story of Cinderella.

When I write to my grandchildren, I usually send a very brief message (that their parents can read to them) and a picture—a photograph or a picture that I cut out of a newspaper or magazine. Pictures give us a way to communicate before they learn to read and write with standard print. Pictures are reminders to young children that you are thinking of them and love them.

The same statement applies to older children, and even to adults. A drawing or a photograph may often send the message that you want to

Please see page 2

Drawing upon other ways of learning

offer. A picture postcard, for example, says clearly: "I'm enjoying myself and thinking of you." Nice message.

Another Way of Learning

Our Family Literacy Center just finished a videotape, ***Make a Difference—Share a Book***, that shows families how to hold conversations about books that they read together. One strategy shows a father and two boys reading *Treasure Island* together. After finishing a chapter, the three of them each draw a picture that represents a feeling or an idea that they would like to share with the others. Then they talk about their drawings and compliment each other for what they revealed. From their enthusiasm, we can tell that they enjoy communicating through their illustrations and they learn about each other's thoughts in a way that does not necessarily need words.

A 12-year-old boy with whom I share letters said that he was having difficulty figuring out his math problems. At the time, they were working on a way to determine the area of a triangle. I suggested he draw a picture as he worked through his math problems; perhaps his drawings would help him see more clearly what he had to do. He then sent back his drawings and his notes for a problem as his way of thanking me for the idea. Drawing did in fact help him solve the problems more easily.

As you know, psychotherapists sometimes ask clients to draw a picture of a situation or to draw a picture that represents their feelings. The therapist hopes to learn through images what may not reveal itself through words. Not everyone is articulate enough to describe all that resides in his or her mind. Drawing becomes another way to communicate feelings and ideas.

In our letters to children, many of us send pictures as a way of introducing ourselves and of showing our pen pals the city or the neighborhood in which we live. Great idea! Keep

THE Write Partner

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Director: Dr. Carl B. Smith

Editor: Joyce McMahan Cookman

For more information, phone **(800) 759–4723**

or write us at

Senior Partners in Education
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Bloomington, IN 47408–2698

those pictures coming. They give your pen pal a sense of your reality and a sense of your personality. More importantly, your pictures tell your junior writing partners that they, too, can communicate effectively through drawing or through pictures, if that is a medium that suits them.

Books to share

These videos, books and tapes will help parents help their children. Call **800-759-4723,** Fax **812-855-4220**, or Write **The Family Literacy Center** at 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 to order.

Make a Difference—Talk about Books

Developed by Carl B. Smith

Video, 16 minutes,

Grades PreK-8, $49.95
Order number: 309-1628

This video demonstrates techniques families can use as they read aloud and talk together about books, use writing to share feelings about books, and use art to communicate about books.

Parents Sharing Books

Developed by the

Family Literacy Center

Video. 16 minutes,

Grades K-12, $34.95
Order number: 300-1079

In this video, parents, children, teachers and principals share success stories from book-sharing programs at their schools. The benefits of book sharing and simple strategies to encourage reading and communication are demonstrated for parents.

Connect—How to Get Your Kids to Talk to You

By Carl B. Smith with Susan Moke and Marjorie R. Simic

Softcover, 6" x 9", 240 pp.,$14.95
Order number: A3-100-1265

An easy-to-understand, motivational guide for parents on establishing book—sharing and open communication with their children. Note the chapters which discuss using illustrations to communicate.

Enjoying Art All Around Us

Softcover 5" x 7" book and audio tape, $9.00.

Order number: A3-104-1268

One of 30 titles offered in the *Parents and Children Together* series, this book and tape emphasize the many forms and styles of art. It describes activities for parents and children to do together, suggests books for future reading and offers three read-along stories.

Very Important PartnerS

Santa Ana kids: Por favor, nos escriban

By Joyce McMahan Cookman
Write Partner Editor

July. Yes, some of Carole Bersani's fourth and fifth graders at Glenn L. Martin School in Santa Ana, Calif., have been waiting since July for a Senior Partner. But wait, you say. School doesn't start until August or September.

Not for these Southern Californians. Martin School has a year-round schedule. As Ms. Bersani explained, "There are four cycles of students and teachers, though only three cycles of students and teachers are in session at any given time."

Each cycle is in session for three months, and then is off for about a month. Thus Bersani's students began the school year in early July, had the month of October off, returned for three months, had the month of February off, and are now entering their last cycle of the school year. They will attend school from the first of March until the end of May. The school year begins anew a month later, in July.

The school never remains empty of children for long. "During the vacation periods, the school offers intersession, similar to summer school," Bersani said. Students who are performing below grade level come then for remedial work. There is no accelerated program available though students often come during vacation to participate in band, choir, or computer classes.

In addition to their year-round schedule, Bersani's students have the distinction of being the only Junior Partners who are members of an English as a Second Language class. All of Bersani's students are from Hispanic families and speak Spanish as their first language at home.

"The letters from Senior Partners tie in nicely with the students' learning of English."

"My children are wonderful!" Bersani said. "They are warm and loving. They appreciate everything, and shower me with letters, picture- and handmade cards."

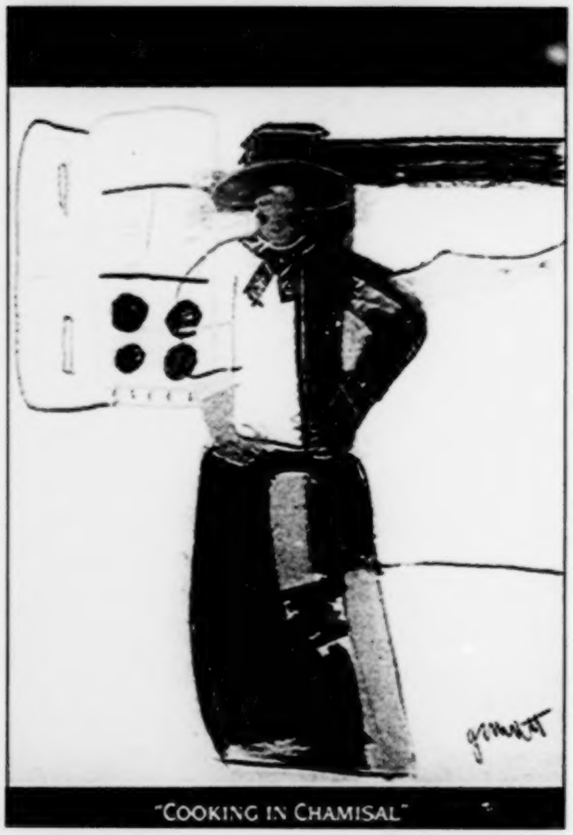
Though her students live in inner city conditions and must cope with some social and economic challenges, Bersani admires them for the way they help each other and the positive stories they share about their families. "They are eager to learn, and they are very respectful and honest."

"You should see them at play too," she said. "They love recess, they love to play board games, to make puzzles. Soccer is very popular with these kids too," she said, offering topics Senior Partners could pursue in letters.

"The letters that we receive from the Senior Partners tie in very nicely with the students' learning of English," Bersani explained. "They read them very carefully, and often use dictionaries to figure out new words. They read them aloud to me often, which (also) helps them with their oral skills."

Bersani went on to say that her students had learned how to write friendly letters and now writing to Senior Partners was a realistic application of the lesson. "Any exposure to the written language is going to help these kids become better readers."

"The students who have been matched with Senior Partners are so excited when they see that special envelope arriving into their eager little hands," she said, adding it may be the first letter some have ever received. "They show the letters to their friends; they bring them up to me; they feel very special and important..."



Senior Partner Lynne Gilliatt sends her Junior Partner reproductions of her artwork such as this painting.

It is hoped that by the time this issue of *The Write Partner* is read, all of Carole Bersani's students will be feeling special and important. The recruitment of five education majors at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, enabled the last of her students to be matched in late February. It is also hoped those Senior Partners matched earlier with her students will have now showered their Juniors with a letter or three.

It's been a long time since July.

These Junior Partners still need a Senior:

♣ 3rd graders, Van Wert, Ohio ♣ 3rd graders, Tuckerton, N.J. ♣ 7th graders, St. Louis, Mo. ♣ 6th graders, Yemassee, S.C. with e-mail access. Contact Joyce McMahan Cookman (jcookman@indiana.edu) or call 1-800-759-4723 to volunteer.

BOOK CORNER

Celebrate National Art Month. Look at art, draw art, read about art, write after being inspired by art. Enjoy art!

FOR AGES 3 AND UP:

I Read Signs

By Tana Hoban, Greenwillow Books, New York, 1983, $14.95

Tana Hoban's many books for children use her photographs to teach concepts such as color or form but most of all they encourage readers to look closely at the art within everyday surroundings. This particular book introduces signs and symbols seen along the highway.

FOR AGES 5 AND UP:

No Good in Art

By Lillian Hoban,Greenwillow Books, New York, 1980, $4.99

Jim thinks he's no good in art. In fact, he may be the only kindergartner with an empty page instead of a drawing.

FOR AGES 9 AND UP:

The Eleventh Hour/ A Curious Mystery

By Graeme Base, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1988, $11.95.

An elephant's eleventh birthday party is marked by eleven games preceding the banquet to be eaten at the eleventh hour, but when the time to eat arrives, the birthday feast has disappeared. The reader is invited to guess the thief. That's just the story; savor the visual tale as well.

FOR AGES 12 AND UP:

Window

By Jeannie Baker, Greenwillow Books, New York, 1991, $14.00

Time Flies

By Eric Rohmann, Crown Publishers, New York,1994 $15.00

Full Moon Soup *or* The Fall of the Hotel Splendide

By Alastair Graham, Dial Books, New York, 1991, $15.00

Who says picture books without words are only for the very young? Here are three that have been used by students ranging in age from middle school to college. They can be studied for the stories they tell in their artwork but some teachers have also asked students to read the pictures, then write the story they think is being told. "Windows" features amazing collage constructions, showing a changing environment as viewed from a boy's bedroom window. "Time Flies" is a tale of a bird flying around a dinosaur exhibit in a natural history museum. "Full Moon Soup" is a farcical romp as strange and ridiculous things happen when the hotel chef samples the soup under the full moon.

Letters to Children

Several new Senior Partners have joined us in recent weeks, so they may not be familar with our Letters section. These are some sample letters you may use for inspiration in writing your own letter.

AGES 3–5

Dear Jordan,

I'm sending you this picture of a cactus which grows in our yard. You can also see our view of the mountains. Would you send me a drawing of a tree growing in your yard?

Your Senior Partner

AGES 6—8

Dear Emma,

You are such a good artist. I have tacked the latest drawing you sent me on my bulletin board in my office. Whenever my co-workers come in, they stop to admire your work and ask, "Who's the artist?" I'm always proud to say, "Oh, that was drawn by Emma, my Junior Partner." You have turned my office into an art gallery.

Your Senior Partner

AGES 9–12

Dear Phoebe,

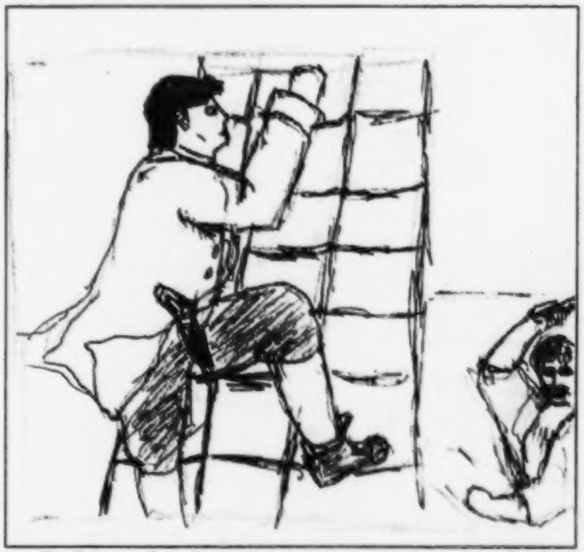
I'm glad you liked the newspaper pictures about the snowstorm. Do you ever wish you lived in a state that had snow? My sons liked the snow in December and January because school was cancelled on some days and they had fun sledding and building a snow fort. But now they want the weather to be warm so they can ride their bikes, something you can do year round. Tell me what kind of outdoor activities you enjoy.

Your Senior Partner

AGES 13-16

Dear Mike,

Recently I was talking to a young man who was reading *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. He showed me a sketch that he had drawn after reading a chapter. Here is the drawing:



I thought it was a great way to help a reader visualize the setting or the action of a story. What do you think of the idea?

Sometimes I draw charts or graphs when I am trying to understand a historical account. If you do things like that, perhaps you would be willing to share some of your sketches with me.

Your Senior Partner,

Word Play

These drawings are symbols (or sometimes they are called icons.) Can you name each one and tell what it stands for? Can you draw some more symbols that aren't included here ?

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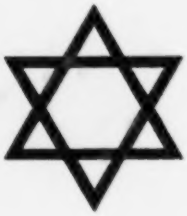

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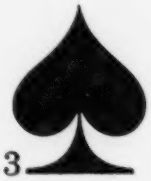

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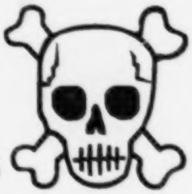

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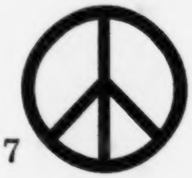

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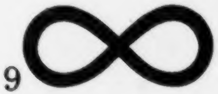

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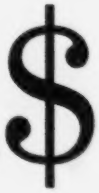

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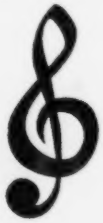

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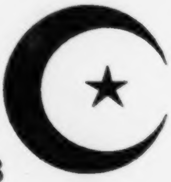

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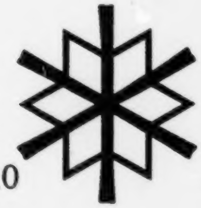

1. Star of David/ Jewish religion
2. Division sign/ Mathematics
3. Spade/ Playing card suit
4. Dollar sign/ Money
5. Skull and crossbones/ Danger or Poison
6. Treble clef/ Music
7. Peace sign/ Politics or Anti-War
8. Star and crescent/ Islamic religion
9. Infinity/ Biology and Mathematics
10. Snowflake/ Weather

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 24 / APRIL 1996 SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Growing support

Help others spring back

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

The spring months perk up our spirits with new plants, leaves coming back, and newly planted crops. It's our annual reminder that life is always hopeful, no matter how dreary the recent past.

In our families, we often experience a similar rhythm of winter and spring. The coldness of winter appears in many forms—loss of a job, break-up of a marriage, illness, substance abuse, continuing personal conflict. For many complex reasons, our American families suffer from all sorts of instability. When the family is rocked by crisis or some unhappy condition, children often suffer the most.

Because children lack the experi-

Please see page 2

Daffodils dance in an April rain on a hillside in Bloomington, Indiana.

Support plants seeds of encouragement

ence to know that the problems of life can be solved, that the ugly periods of life can be followed by periods of joy, they can easily fall into black moods. When children become depressed, when they begin to believe that they can't succeed, of course their grades slip, they become behavior problems, they lose hope.

Especially when school and personal problems overwhelm them is when children need someone to offer them a new view, to remind them that problems can be solved, to give them hope for a brighter day. It helps a little just to encourage children to keep smiling. "When you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you," says the lyrics of a song. But children need more than a slogan. They need some practical examples, too.

Make Your World Better

Stories that guide actions may help some youngsters. For example:

I pulled up behind a rusted old pickup truck piled high with empty soft drink cans. Sitting on top of the cans with his back against the cab was a scruffy young boy reading a book. He turned his head and yelled into the cab:

"Hey, Dad. Did you get to the part where the animal attacked him in the dark cave?"

Dad yelled back through the open window:

"Yeah! It sure scared me when he got stabbed in the dark. And I thought he was a gonner when he threw his hatchet in the dark."

Just six months earlier that boy was in a class for slow readers. He dragged his father to a meeting with other parents and their children from that school. The point of the meeting was to show family members how to read books together and to talk about them. The father said as he came in, "I don't belong here. I ain't never read a book in my life."

But his son convinced the father to stay because the son needed help. Six months later, they both had

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improved their reading skills and they were enjoying their book, even on the way to sell old cans to the recycling center.

This story's hopeful ending would not have happened if the boy had not taken action to change the situation.

Certainly encourage children to lift their heads and to put on a smiling face. But also give them practical images or practical steps that they can take towards a hopeful future.

Books to share

These books and video will help parents help their children. Call **800-759-4723,** Fax **812-855-4220**, or Write **The Family Literacy Center** at 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 to order.

Homeside Activities

By Developmental Studies Center

Softcover with lay-flat binding,

8 1/2" x 11", $13.95.

Grade K: A3-103-1509; Grade 1: A3-103-1510; Grade 2: A3-103-1511; Grade 3: A3-103-1512; Grade 4: A3-103-1513; Grade 5: A3-103-1514

These activities offer parents a specific, easy way to become more involved in their children's schooling and are designed to help build communication and trust among children, parents and teachers. Separate volumes for grades K-5 feature 18 brief activities each for children to do at home with a parent or other older person. The activities, presented as reproducible sheets in both English and Spanish, include short games, drawing and writing activities, and "conversation starters" which allow adults and children to share ideas and experiences with one another. There are no right or wrong answers.

Homeside Activities Video

Video. 12 minutes,

Grades K-5, $29.95
Order number: A3-303-1515

This brief, motivating video demonstrates how *Homeside Activities* build positive interactions among parents, children and teachers. The video is not grade specific and is appropriate for use with grades K-5.

*CLASS*ifieds

Wanted: A few good Senior Partners for 3rd graders, Van Wert, Ohio; 3rd graders, Tuckerton, N.J.; 6th graders, Yemassee, S.C. with e-mail access; senior high students, Flat Rock, Mich., with e-mail access. Contact Joyce McMahan Cookman (jcookman@indiana.edu) or call 1-800-759-4723.

Very Important PartnerS

Florida Retired Teachers set the pace

By Joyce McMahan Cookman
Write Partner Editor

Letters from Senior Partners don't necessarily need to go across the country to have a positive effect. Sometimes they only need to travel across town.

When members of the Alachua County, Fla. Retired Teachers Association volunteered as Senior Partners, they asked to be matched with students within their Gainesville area. They even designated the grade levels, fourth and fifth graders, and the two elementary schools, Idywild and Williams, from which to select Junior Partners.

"We requested Junior Partners from the fourth and fifth grades because we thought that was an age level when students are really becoming involved in the writing process, Lena Griffin, a representative of the Retired Teachers Association said. "Members also specified Idywild and Williams elementaries because they knew those two schools had diverse student populations that would especially benefit from our involvement," she explained.

Since the Retired Teachers Association had 20 Senior Partner volunteers and the two schools had over 300 fourth and fifth graders, not all students will have a writing partner this year. However, Marge Baker, Volunteer Coordinator for the Alachua County Schools, hopes the Retired Teachers are setting the curve for more Senior Partners matched with area school children.

"I want to recruit Senior Partners from other service clubs, church groups, and University of Florida organizations in Gainesville," Baker said. "We have a program called "Rockin' Reader" when older residents and students come in to read to prekindergarten through first grades. We've also encouraged involvement by college athletes through a mentoring program called CHAMPS," she said.

"The Senior Partner program gives these groups flexibility," Baker said. "Those residents who are employed full-time or attend classes at the University of Florida may not have schedules that allow time to volunteer within a classroom. Retirees such as these teachers may not have the desire nor the convenience of returning to a classroom. Yet all these people still want to be supportive of students and schools. Therefore, writing letters helps meet the needs of both Juniors and Seniors," she said.

Through the assistance of Superintendent Robert Hughes, Volunteer Coordinator Baker, Idywild principal Dr. John Fielding, Williams principal

Dr. Barbara Buys, Idywild fifth grade teacher Mrs. Mary White, and Williams fifth grade teachers Ms. Mary Crane, Mr. John Miranda, and Mr. James Smith, the first ten matches are completed.

With the compilation of the second ten names of Retired Teachers Association volunteers, the fourth graders in Mr. Embry McCray's class at Idywild and Mrs. Susan Hencin, Mrs. Terri Lane and Mrs. Kirsten Mitchell's classes at Williams will also begin receiving mail.

Along the Network

Multiple Media in Michigan

John Bachelor, who teaches at Woodhaven High School in Flat Rock, Michigan, will make a presentation at the end of April for Michigan teachers of the emotionally impaired on the subject of his students' use of photography and journals, and their participation as Junior Partners.

Bright Light in Alabama

Senior Partner Judy Beal of Hutchinson, Kansas, wrote: "I just wanted to let you know how much I'm enjoying my correspondence with Jessie," (her eight-year-old Junior Partner who's a home schooler in Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.) "We've exchanged four letters so far. Jessie is very bright, very appreciative and full of information and curiosity."

World View in New York

Third grade students of Richard Siegelman in Oyster Bay, N.Y., received recognition in *The Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot* when they completed a painting of a world map on the surface of their school playground. The map measures approximately 20 by 30 feet. It lies beside a map of the United States that Mr. Siegelman's class painted two years ago. Mr. Siegelman sent copies of the newspaper article to all his students' Senior Partners.

Think Summer

Some Junior Partners still hope to have a pen pal. Some Senior Partners just joined the program this month. Some Junior Partners waited a long time before they were matched or received letters. Some Senior Partners waited a long time before they received responses to their letters. Some Junior Partners stopped writing. So did some Seniors. But wait! It's not too late! Senior Partners, if you would like to continue to write over the summer, please send that request to your Junior Partner's teacher. If the Junior Partner's parent approves the release of the student's last name and home address, you can use the summer to continue the correspondence.

BOOK CORNER

Many books, both fiction and non-fiction, are available to help young readers deal with today's problems. Space limitations here prevent listing the many topics covered. Consult with your school and public librarians for more recommended titles.

FOR AGES 3 AND UP:

Goodbye House

By Frank Asch, Simon and Shuster, New York, 1986, $4.95.

Just before leaving with his family for the move to their new home, Little Bear says goodbye to all his favorite places in and around his old house. Simple words and pictures offer easy-to-understand ways of dealing with moving.

FOR AGES 5 AND UP:

Dinosaurs Divorce

A Guide for Changing Families

By Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1986, $15.95.

Though this book offers serious and practical advice to children about divorce, its dinosaur characters present the information in a light, non-threatening way. Children will know Marc Brown's artwork because of his popular Arthur series, such as *Arthur's Eyes, Arthur's Thanksgiving,* etc. The authors write from the experience of a second marriage and the point of view provided by Marc Brown's sons, Tolon and Tucker.

FOR AGES 9 AND UP:

Mending Peter's Heart

By Maureen Wittbold, Illustrated by Larry Salk, Portunus Publishing Company, 1995, $8.95.

A young boy shares his grief over the death of his dog with an elderly neighbor who has also experienced the loss of a loved one, his wife. There's lots to gain from this book, about coping with death, about sharing grief with someone who understands, and about seeking the support of older friends and relatives who may offer a special perspective on dealing with death.

FOR AGES12 AND UP:

Sugar Isn't Everything

By Willo Davis Roberts, Antheneum, New York, 1987, $12.95.

A fictional format tells the story of Amy who discovers she has juvenile-onset diabetes. The book can be used as a guide by young people with diabetes as well as those who are not diabetic but who will be able to sympathize with Amy's fears and achievements.

Letters to Children

We all have to deal with some adversity in our lives. It might be a personal failure, a death, or the collapse of a relationship. If we know that a child is going through one of these experiences, we can acknowledge the adverse situation, then offer words of encouragement. Sometimes, it may also be appropriate to mention our own experience as a way of showing that we all have these struggles.

AGES 3–5

Dear Jake,

During a recent storm, the snow and wind knocked down some of our trees. I am sending you a picture of a fallen tree. Our trees will grow again, and our yard will be as pretty as ever. Please send me a picture of something pretty that you like.

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 6—8

Dear Samantha,

When I was your age, my pet dog ran away. I was very sad for a long time. I know that you miss your pet, but you can be happy that she was such a good friend to you. You will find all kinds of friends as you grow up. Like your pet, they will love and help you. Do you have a photo or a drawing of your cat that you can send me?

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 9–12

Dear Josh,

I am sorry to hear that you did not make the school team, especially since you wanted to play so much. I think you should find another team to try out for, at the YMCA or Boys' Club or church. If you like to play a sport because it gives you a thrill just to play, then you can find pleasure on almost any team. Though you are disappointed right now, learn to play for the fun of it, and keep trying. I am confident that you will succeed.

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 13-16

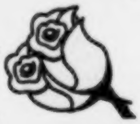
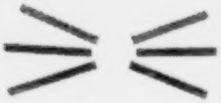
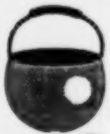
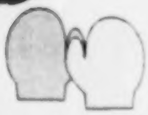
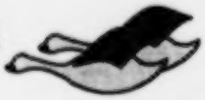
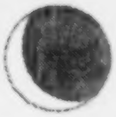
Dear Marie,

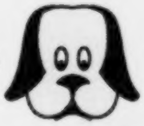
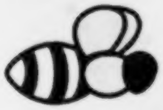
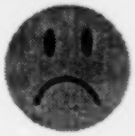
I apologize for being late with this letter. My father became very ill about a month ago and then died recently. I spent a lot of time with him, then with all the details associated with the funeral and closing up his house. We turned his funeral into a true celebration of my father's life. Though we shared a lot of tears, we also shared a lot of laughs as we recalled the good things and the funny things that happened around him. To me, that's the way we can best honor a person—by celebrating his existence, by remembering all the good things. I hope that your life has many good experiences, and you will be able to find reasons to celebrate your relationships even amidst the tears that they sometimes bring.

Your senior pen pal,

Word Play

Ever heard of visualization? It's a technique to help you relax as you face challenging situations. Participate in a sport? Visualizing or creating a picture in your mind of how you'd like to perform successfully can help you. Nervous about visiting the dentist? Try visualizing pleasant thoughts in your mind either while in the dentist's chair or fun things to do after the appointment's over. See if you can visualize some of "My Favorite Things".

Raindrops on  and
 on kittens,
Bright copper  and
warm woolen ,
Wild  that fly
with the  on their wing,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the  bites,
When the  stings,
When I'm feeling ,
I simply remember my favorite things
and then I don't feel so bad.

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 25 / MAY 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Looking out

It's Field Trip Time

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

Have you been to the airport when a group of children parade down the concourse led by an airport guide? Or at a government monument, such as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, and see dozens of school buses discharging children? Or at the local fire station when a group of school children come to see what a local firehouse looks like? The children and their teachers are there on a field trip.

The spring of the year is the prime time for teachers to take students on field trips, that is, an out of school excursion that broadens students' experiences. As pen pals to children, we can remind them that we are

Please see page 2

Laura Lubbe, a fifth grader at University Elementary School in Bloomington, Ind., describes for her mother, Shiela Van Bree, how students have created four garden areas at the school.

Learn from each other's views

interested in what they are learning on these trips:

"Dear Abbie,

"You may be taking a field trip with your classmates. Don't forget to let me know what you learn. Help me keep up-to-date by telling me what you find interesting in your trip."

Share your interests

Though the phrase "field trip" is a school-based term, we can learn, of course, any time we head out to a new place. If I walk to a neighborhood museum that is displaying cowboy art, I can learn something new. If I visit a park because it has planted a wide variety of trees and has marked them with their names, I can learn something new. If I drive to a river gorge, I can learn something about the layers of rock that the river has laid bare.

We can remind our writing partners that these neighborhood and family excursions may reveal interesting ideas. Please share them. On the flip side, you may take some excursion where you learn something that interests you. Don't just send your pen pal a postcard that says, "Wish you were here." Send a postcard that gives at least one fact that captured your interest:

"Dear Jake,

"I walked down into this gorge to a rock level that was formed millions of years before the dinosaurs walked this earth. Each layer of rock stood for a major development in the earth's crust."

In your own way, you can share your adventures with your writing partner and encourage him or her to share with you. That way you both can be excited about learning and sharing the interesting things that you have learned.

Learning never ends Young and old can learn side by side, and they can take pleasure in knowing that they can always learn and share their new found ideas.

THE Write Partner

Senior Partners in Education is a program of the Family Literacy Center at Indiana University. Senior Partners uses the experience and good will of seniors to assure children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. The Family Literacy Center is a non-profit organization.

Director: Dr. Carl B. Smith

Editor: Joyce McMahan Cookman

For more information, phone **(800) 759-4723**

or write us at

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Books to share

Parents and children can explore new worlds with these books. Call **800-759-4723,** Fax **812-855-4220**, or Write **The Family Literacy Center** at 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698 to order.

Teach a Child to Read with Children's Books

By Mark B. Thogmartin

Softcover, 7 1/4 "x 9 1/4"

Grades PreK-2

$19.95.

Order number: C4-109-1633

Subtitled "Combining story reading, phonics and writing to promote reading success," this book for parents, parent volunteers, and others who work one-on-one with children, offers an enjoyable, integrated approach to helping a child learn to read.

My Galaxy of Memories, Feelings, and Dreams

By George and Marilee Tomek

Softcover, 8 1/2" x 11"

Grades 1-8

Price:$11.95. (Available in 10, 30 and 100-packs at discount for classroom orders.)

Order number: C4-111-1634

This is a writing journal for kids and their families to provide an opportunity for recording a year's worth of thoughts, activities and ideas. Family members take part as they fill in stories about their lives and share their thoughts.

Parents & Children Together: Different Peoples of the World

Developed by

The Family Literacy Center

Softcover 5" x 7" book and audio tape

Grades PreK-5

$10.00.

Order number: C4-900-1147

One of 30 titles offered in the Parents and Children Together series, this book and tape offer a dynamic way to help parents support their children's development and school performance. The book and tape offer activities for families to do together, suggests books for future reading, and provides three read-along stories. This issue introduces readers to people of other lands

Summer reading and writing challenge

The Summer Reading and Writing Challenge is on, and free kits are now available. These READ*WRITE*NOW! kits include a booklet of "Activities for Reading and Writing Fun" as well as "how to" materials, a vocabulary log, certificates and more.

What, you ask, is READ*WRITE*-NOW!?

It's a summer challenge to improve the reading and writing of children in pre-school through sixth grade.

How can a person participate?

All you need is a child, a book and a "learning partner" — a teenager, senior citizen, relative, neighbor, or friend. You are also invited to find learning partners and link them with children in your community.

What do the child and reading partner do?

Children agree to read and write 30 minutes a day and to learn a new vocabulary word five days per week. Once or twice a week, the reading partner gets together with the child to provide 30 minutes of extra help using the kit and or other materials.

What's in the kit?

A booklet of "Activities for Reading and Writing Fun" was designed by reading experts for use with children ages birth to Grade 6. The booklet is meant to be used in addition to reading with children every day. Also included in the kit are bookmarks, certificates, a reading vocabulary log and a coupon for a free personal pan Pizza Hut pizza for children who complete the summer challenge.

How can I get a kit, or find out more about READ*WRITE*NOW!?

- Check with your local library. Kits are being distributed to 16,000 libraries and to many Reading is Fundamental (RIF) sites.

- Check the Web site—

http://www.ed.gov/Family/

- Call 1-800-USA-LEARN

(Limited to one kit per household, please.)

Who is involved?

READ*WRITE*NOW! is sponsored by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. Major partners include Pizza Hut, AMC Entertainment, Inc., American Library Association, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Books & Beyond, Center for the Book for the Library of Congress, Corporation for National Service, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Hadassah, National Dairy Council, Reading Is Fundamental, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Of the teacher, by the teacher, for the teacher

By Joyce McMahan Cookman
Write Partner Editor

Recently I attended a niece's graduation from Butler University in Indianapolis. The guest speaker and recipient of an honorary degree was novelist and Indianapolis native, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Vonnegut asked the audience first to raise their hands if they could think of a teacher, from within the confines of a traditional classroom or without, who had influenced their lives. Almost every hand went up.

Next he asked us to say the name of that influential teacher to the person next to us. My sister and I turned to each other and said the name of our high school band teacher. My husband named his college professor of classical Greek. My nephew named his high school choral director, as did his sister, the graduate. My nephew's wife said she couldn't narrow it down to one person. She's right. I thought of many other names. The next day was Mother's Day and it suddenly occurred to me that I'd overlooked the obvious — the first and best teacher I'd ever had, my mother (and my father.)

As I wrap up my first year as coordinator of Senior Partners in Education, I reflect upon one of the best aspects of my job, working with teachers. Some of those teachers are the energetic and enthusiastic leaders of Junior Partner classrooms, trying to balance the needs and demands of their students against the needs and demands of their own lives. Some are retired teachers who served as Senior Partners, willing to share their time and expertise regarding the needs of those students. Others were future teachers, college students preparing for their roles with some "tutoring" from their Junior Partners.

Then there were the Senior Partners who, though not formally trained as educators served as teachers for Junior Partners when they provided words of support in their letters.

As I once did as a teacher myself, I'm evaluating this past year and considering plans for how to make next year better. I'm seeking more Senior Partners so no one is disappointed, as some were this year. I'm looking for ways to avoid some of the fizzled partnerships, where sometimes a Junior Partner or a Senior Partner stopped writing.

I'd welcome a report card from **all** teachers. Send them to the hand in Bloomington, Indiana, waving thankfully, at Mr. Vonnegut and you.

BOOK CORNER

Have your sack lunch? Know who your partner is? Ok, let's go!

FOR AGES 3 & UP:

The Umbrella Day

By Nancy Evans Cooney, Philomel, New York, 1989,$14.95.

Missy thinks that she doesn't need an umbrella, but finds that it can do more than just protect her from the rain. This book prompts children to create imaginative adventures to have under an umbrella.

The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash

By Trinka Hakes Noble, Pictures by Steven Kellogg, Penguin Books, New York, 1980, $18.99 hrbk, $4.99 pbk.

It starts off as an ordinary class trip to the farm—boring kind of dull. But before very long, chaos takes over as one zany incident leads to another. Soon the entire farm is in an uproar.

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

Song Lee and the Leech Man

By Suzy Kline, Viking, New York, 1995, $11.99.

Harry plots revenge against Sidney, the class tattletale, when Miss Mackle's second graders go on a field trip to the pond.

The Magic School Bus—

By Joanna Cole, Illustrated by Bruce Degen, Scholastic, Inc., 1987-1994, $14.95-$19.95.

Just name where you'd like to visit—**The Waterworks, The Solar System, On the Ocean Floor, Inside the Human Body, In the Time of the Dinosaurs**—and the strangest teacher ever, Ms. Frizzle, will lead her class on a field trip there.

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

2095/The Time Warp Trio series

By Jon Scieszka, Viking/Penguin, New York, 1995, $11.99.

While on a field trip to New York's Museum of Natural History, Joe, Sam and Fred travel 100 years into the future, where they encounter robots, anti-gravity disks and their own grandchildren.

Tintin's Travel Diaries

By Daniel De Bruycker and Maxmilien Dauber, Barron's, Hauppauge, N.Y., 1995, $11.95 hrdbk, $6.95 pbk.

This series enables readers to explore ten different countries with Tintin and his cartoon pals. The volumes look at each country's customs, cultures and geography, using both cartoon art and color photos. In the two most recent editions, Tintin tours Scotland and Tibet.

FOR AGES 12 & UP

The Chilling Hour

Tales of the Real and Unreal

By Collin McDonald, Cobblehill Books, New York, 1992, $14.00

A collection of horror stories in which some strange occurrences happen in otherwise normal settings such as a school field trip.

Crazy Weekend

By Gary Soto, Scholastic, Inc., New York, 1994, $3.50.

Spending the weekend in his uncle's messy apartment in Fresno is not Hector's idea of getting away from it all. But after flying a rickety plane, spotting an armored car heist and warding off bumbling thieves, it becomes his craziest weekend ever.

Letters to Children

AGES 3–5

Dear Christopher,

Your mom wrote that you visited the fire station with your class. Fire trucks used to ALWAYS be red, but now sometimes they are yellow or green. What color were the fire trucks you saw? Send me a drawing!

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 6—8

Dear Sherry,

Thanks for your letter describing your trip to the Natural History museum. Those dinosaur skeletons sounded impressive...and a little scary. How did you learn how to spell the names, like apatosaurus and tyrannosaurus?

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 9–12

Dear Haley,

As I'm writing this letter, I'm looking out the window into my backyard. We have had so much rain that it looks like a little pond out there. And to think, where you live, it's been so dry, you've had problems with fires. Wish there was some way we could send some of this rain to your area. That would help everyone, wouldn't it?

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 13-16

Dear Efren,

I'm enclosing some brochures about the Smoky Mountain National Park which should give you some good information for your report. I'm glad you mentioned you were researching that topic. I enjoyed helping you. It also gave me an opportunity to recall times I visited the Smokies. Let me know how your report turns out.

Your senior pen pal,

Word Play

Time for a field trip of our own. Explore the phrases below, selecting the correct word to complete each one. Watch your step, though! There are nine possible choices, but you will only use seven of them.

Two roads diverged in a yellow ______.

It's all happening at the _______.

The ______ of least resistance.

Happy ______ to you.

Follow the yellow brick ________.

Climb every ____________.

This _______ is your land.

LAND

TRIP

ROAD

TRAILS

ZOO

MOUNTAIN

WOOD

PATH

DIRECTION

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 26 / JUNE 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Time out

Summertime, and the learning is easy

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

It seems that every child now goes to some kind of camp during the summer months. Though I know that there are many kids who do not head for summer camp, the number who do grows each year.

Elliott Teh of Bloomington, Ind. plants tomatoes in his plot at the Hilltop Garden and Nature Center. The Hilltop summer program involves first grade to middle school students.

The idea of going to the backwoods to enjoy nature and to learn to live in a primitive environment still appeals to some families but the emphasis for today's summer camps has shifted to learning or to improving skills. Sports camps, the main destination of most kids, have cropped up on practically every college campus in the country.

In my hometown literally thousands of youngsters report each summer to sports camps that cover every

Please see page 2

A great time for learning

sport that I can think of — football, basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis, gymnastics, cheerleading, swimming, volleyball, fencing, and so on. The kids enroll in these camps to learn how to become more competitive, and of course to say that they attended this sports camp at the university.

Academic camps open opportunities for another group of kids to improve their computer, writing, speaking, leadership, foreign language, science, or math skills. Summer months can be a time for intense learning, no matter what your interest may be.

Camp in your library

I believe there are two guidelines that we can send to the children with whom we correspond. Both of them reinforce the notion that summer is a time to continue learning, but perhaps not in school.

Guideline 1:

We can learn anywhere we decide to learn.

We control learning, not a school or a teacher. Therefore, we can decide to learn in our backyard or in the library just as well as we can in school or in a summer camp. For example, if one of our relatives has a failing kidney, we can go to the library and learn all about the functions of the kidneys and how people survive when a kidney fails. To learn those things we do have to take action, of course. The library is one of the first places we should recommend for learning and summer reading.

Guideline 2:

Use summer learning to develop people skills.

Besides the particular focus of any camp—tennis or computers—the campers have to learn to get along with a variety of other kids. Those close interactions test the adaptability, the patience, and the respect that

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each camper brings to this new environment. In the library, at a museum, or on the playground, similar opportunities occur. Each child experiences the give and take of a broad society, and he or she must learn how to act responsibly and charitably while working with other summer learners.

In our summer letters to our Junior Partners, we might want to say: "Dear Pal,

This summer learn whatever you decide is important, but also reach out to new people and show them what it means to act like a good citizen. In that way, you will grow and so will your new friends."

Books to share

To order these titles from the Parents and Children Together series Call **800-759-4723,** Fax **812-855-4220**, or Write **The Family Literacy Center** at 2805 E. 10th St., Bloomington, IN 47408-2698.

Stretching Young Minds in the Summertime

Order number: A3-900-1111

Recreation for Health and Learning

Order number: A3-900-1102

Using the Library

Order number: A3-900-1141

Developed by

The Family Literacy Center

Softcover 5" x 7" book and audio tape

Grades PreK-5

$10.00.

Each book with cassette contains:

- Answers to parents' questions about learning
- Education advice written by Chapter 1 directors and literacy teachers
- Activities for parents and children to do together
- Suggested books for future reading by parents and children
- Two or three delightfully illustrated read-along stories or poems.

Effective Parent Bookshelf (all 30 titles and tapes)

The entire series is also ideal for parent involvement programs, resource libraries, and adult literacy service providers. Teachers can send home particular titles to help parents and children.

$225

Order number: 13-900-1026

Very Important PartnerS

Dear Senior Partners,

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Barbara Smiley, Spencer; Kay Herston, Ellettsville; Judy Himelick, Allison Himelick, Indianapolis; Vivian Davis, Decatur; Sharon Samuelson, Portage; Connie German, Seymour; Dearborn County RSVP, Lawrenceburg,

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VERMONT —Steven Cobb, Burlington.

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KANSAS — Marie Miller, Rose Hill; Judy Beal, Hutchinson.

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PENNSYLVANIA— Pam Thompson, Bridgeville.

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DELAWARE — Sussex County Department of Libraries, Georgetown.

NEW JERSEY — Carol Dye, Toms River.

CANADA — Movement for Canadian Literacy, Ottawa, Ontario.

Very Important PartnerS

Dear Junior Partners,

Junior Partners who wrote independently: **Christie**, Shreveport, La.; **Sara**, Franklin, Tenn.; **Jessica and Julie**, Costa Mesa,Calif.; **Jessie**, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.; **Laura**, Bloomington, Ind.; **Tracy**, Naperville, Ill.; **Elizabeth**, Hazelwood, Mo.

Fourth grade students of Embry McCray and fifth grade students of Mary White at **Idywild Elementary, Gainesville, Fla.**,

Fourth grade students of Susan Hencin, Terri Lane, Kirsten Mitchell and fifth grade students of James Smith, Mary Crane, and John Miranda at **Williams Elementary, Gainesville, Fl.**

Students of John Bachelor, **Woodhaven High School, Flat Rock, Mich.**

Fourth and fifth grade students of Carole Bersani, **Glenn L. Black School, Santa Ana, Calif.**

Third grade students of Leah Finch, **French-American International School, San Francisco, Calif.**

Third grade students of Susan Rodgers, **Tuckerton Elementary, Tuckerton, N.J.**

Third grade students of Carla Schwieterman, **Anthony Wayne Elementary, Van Wert, Ohio.**

Middle school students of Vicki Craig, **Urey Middle School, Walkerton, Ind.**

Fifth grade students of Julia Wasiluk, **Carpenter Elementary School, Orion, Mich.**

Third grade students of Barbara Otto, **Rockbrook Elementary School, Omaha, Neb.**

Fourth grade students of Christine Houston, **North Liberty Elementary School, North Liberty, Ind.**

Third grade students of Richard Siegelman, **Roosevelt School, Oyster Bay, N.Y.**

Fourth grade students of Denise Gruber-Tiemann, **Webster School, Collinsville, Ill.**

Third grade students of Connie Ward, **Alder Elementary, Portland, Ore.**

Third grade students of Marcia Johnson, **Fairland Elementary, Fairland, Ok.**

Third grade students of Joan Weber, **St. Mary's School, Pinckney, Mich.**

Kindergarten-first grade students of Jane Stilwell, **Pittsboro, N.C.**

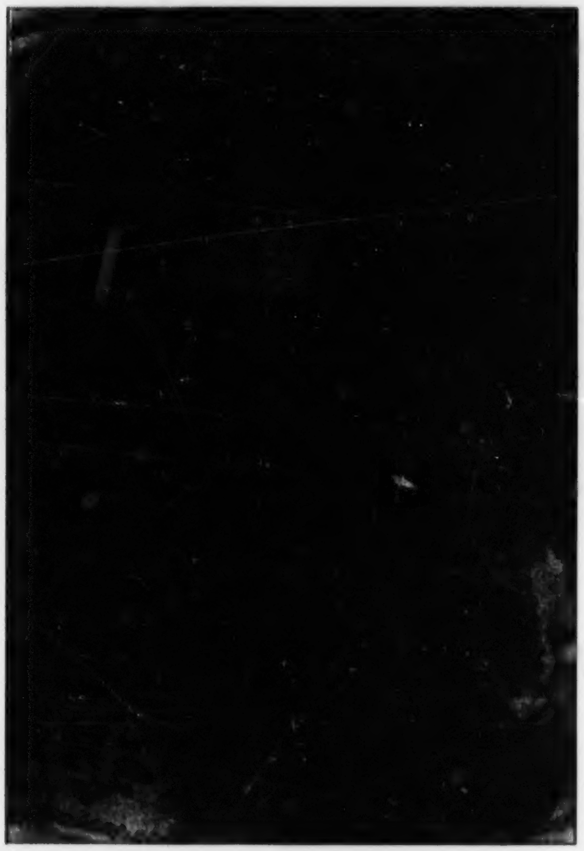
Fourth grade students of Mrs. Trujillo and Mrs. Black, **Mesa View Elementary, Grants, N.M.**

Fourth grade students of Julie Lanovara, **Flower City School, Rochester, N.Y.**

Sixth grade students of Dianne Seminatore, **Fennell Elementary, Yemassee, S.C.**

Thank you, Seniors, Juniors & Teachers,

Joyce McMahan Cookman



Chelsea Davis and Amber Schmit, students in Mrs. Doretta Swinson's class at University Elementary School in Bloomington, Ind., pause before heading home, carrying backpacks filled with the treasures of a year in kindergarten.

BOOK CORNER

Wherever you go this summer — to the beach or to the backyard—don't forget to pack a book!

FOR AGES 3 & UP:

The Vegetables Go to Bed

By Christopher King, Illustrated by Mary GrandPre, Crown Publishers, New York, 1994, $12.

The tomatoes, carrots, spinach plants and other vegetables in the garden prepare to go to bed, each in its own fashion. This is a story in rhyme, with fantastic illustrations, telling us, "One by one, potatoes close their eyes, Listening to the sounds of bells, The peppers' lullabies."

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

The Stupids Take Off

By Harry Allard and James Marshall, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1989, $14.95.

A Stanley Q. Stupid family vacation begins and ends with zany visits to the Stupids' various relatives. One young reader of this book said, "It was especially funny when the Stupids went to bed in their diving suits." The book certainly proves that "the Stupids are everywhere!", and that includes showing up as a movie to be released this summer.

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

Hank the Cowdog series Volumes 1-23

By John R. Erickson, Maverick Books/Gulf Publishing, Houston, 1994, $6.95, pbk; $15.95, audio cassettes.

Hank the Cowdog books are fun to read and also fun to listen to, especially in the car, when you're traveling long distances. The goofy humor keeps everybody entertained, as you learn of the exploits of a slightly pompous cowdog, Hank, and his sidekick, Drover, while supervising ranch security.

FOR AGES 12 & UP

The Secret Garden

By Frances Hodgson Burnett, Crown Publishers, New York, 1911, $4.99. pbk.

This tale of unimaginable riches, of children misunderstood and suffering but conquering all, has maintained a devoted following since it was published at the turn of the century. Mary, the orphaned and neglected heroine, is sent to a huge estate to live. There she discovers a secret garden, a master with a crooked back, his ailing son, Colin, and Dickon, young brother to one of the estates' maids. Under Dickon's guidance, the children make the garden grow and bloom once more without realizing that in the process they, too, will grow and bloom.

Letters to Children

If you have the opportunity, send a postcard to your Junior Partner this summer. You don't have to travel far either. A card picturing your hometown can be as interesting as a distant location. Here are some sample messages to inspire your own correspondence.

AGES 3–5

Dear Regina,

This postcard shows a castle we visited in England. Did you know that your first name means queen? When we visited this castle, I thought of you. Would you like to live in this castle?

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 6—8

Dear Jaime,

Greetings from Canada! We arrived Monday for our summer stay. We've been coming here for about 20 years. We've been busy unpacking and getting the boat in the water. Now I'm ready to do some fishing. Hope I catch lots of Northern Pike, like the one on this postcard. I'll send you another card soon, to let you know whether I'm successful.

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 9–12

Dear LaShonda,

This might sound strange but even though I've lived in Louisville a long time, I've never been to the Kentucky Derby horse race. I have been to the Churchill Downs race track, where the Derby is held, but never on Derby Day. It's too crowded on Derby Day for me to enjoy the race. I'm also not interested in betting. I sent you this postcard to show you what I do like about the Derby and Churchill Downs — the pretty horses.

Your senior pen pal,

AGES 13-16

Dear Rick,

I'm glad you liked the postcard from New Orleans. Knowing you play trumpet in your school band, I thought you'd get a kick out of seeing the picture of the Preservation Jazz Band Hall. It was a terrific performance.

I know you won't be able to send me a tape of your band concert but if you think about it, pick up an extra copy of the program to send me. I'd like to read about what your band and the other performers played. Oh, and don't forget to practice over the summer too!

Your senior pen pal,

Word Play

State the Word

Something's missing from each state name in the left column! Find a three lette word in the right column, to form the name of the state once again. (This puzzl comes from, "Are We There Yet? Travel Puzzles about the USA from Coast t Coast" by Helene Hovanec & Jim Gallagher, The Trumpet Club, New York, 1996.)

N— — — DA
OR— — —N
MON— — —A
COLOR— — —
— — —INOIS
NEBR— — —A
PENNSYL— — —IA
M— — —ESOTA
WIS— — —SIN
A— — —AMA

ADO
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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 27 / SEPTEMBER 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Sending the gift of a letter

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

A local minister and friend of mine showed me a letter he had received from a teenage girl who is serving time in a youth correction facility. She wrote to him because he runs a highly visible celebration of young people's commitment to moral values. It is a weekend gathering called **Youthfest** and it brings thousands of teens together for games, concerts, and inspiration. At the end of her letter, this girl asked for letters to her in prison.

A sign someone cares

I called the program director of this youth correction institution to see if our Senior Partners Program might fulfill a need for some of the girls who are there. The director replied enthusiastically:

"Letters are like gifts to these girls. They are a sign that someone cares."

Dr. Carl B. Smith

We never know, do we, what little act of kindness, what gesture of support, what word of advice will make a difference in a child's life? Perhaps the teenage girl who wrote to my friend would not be incarcerated today if one concerned adult had written to her when she was ten or eleven. If one adult had spent 15 or 20 minutes once a month for one year to encourage her to work for the future, to cheer her on when she reported a valuable accomplishment, to caution her about the trouble that gangs cause youth, would she be locked up today?

Please turn to "Big gifts", page 2

Carl B. Smith, the director of the Family Literacy Center, is a longtime educator on the faculty at Indiana University, the father of four and the grandfather of five.

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Big gifts can arrive in small envelopes

From "Sending the gift", page 1

No one can predict accurately what the gift of a letter will do for a child in the long term. But we do know that children who feel that someone cares will pay attention to the guidance that person offers. No guarantees, but doesn't the potential good give you the energy to spend 15 minutes a month writing to a child who will view your letter as a gift?

Seeking Senior Partners

In addition to the young women from the Indiana Girls School, here are some other young people awaiting a Senior Partner:

Third graders, Van Wert, Ohio

Fifth graders, Grants, N.M.

Third graders, Oyster Bay, N.Y.

Second graders, Pinckney, Mich., paired 2 students to one Senior Partner

Fourth graders, Wells, Texas, paired 3 students to one Senior Partner

Fourth graders, North Liberty, Ind., paired 5 students to one Senior Partner

Teachers of potential Junior Partners in Michigan, Texas and Indiana requested that their students be paired several students to one Senior to encourage collaborative and cooperative learning. The Senior Partner need only write one letter to the group though they may wish to write individual letters if they choose.

Here are excerpts from the letter Dr. Carl Smith referred to in his article:

"Dear YouthFest -

I am a 16 year old at Indiana's Girls' School. ...I had a friend who is 16 and has 3 kids. I also have a friend who is 14 and has a kid. She had the baby when she was 12 years old. I have been pregnant twice . I didn't have them. I am not ready for kids and I thank the Lord for blessing me with the chance to start over again. After I get out (of the Indiana Girls' School) I hope that I can come to the next Youthfest. I feel that if all teens and adults could (realize the) consequences (of at risk behavior) and not try to be so daring, I believe that "Generation X" could make a great turn for the future.

As Always,

THE Write Partner

Senior Partners in Education is a program of the Family Literacy Center at Indiana University. Senior Partners uses the experience and good will of seniors to assure children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. The Family Literacy Center is a non-profit organization.

Director: Dr. Carl B. Smith

Editor: Joyce McMahan Cookman

For more information, phone (800) 759-4723

or write us at:

Senior Partners in Education
Family Literacy Center
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Dear Senior Partners,

Welcome to all new correspondents. Welcome back to those of you joining us again. You've been missed!

I'll begin my letter by telling you a bit about myself. This is my second year to coordinate Senior Partners in Education. Once upon a time I was a high school journalism and English teacher who advised student publications. I have also worked in public relations for a savings and loan.

I have a wonderful husband named Claude who teaches at Indiana University and two great sons, Colin, 13, and Alex, 11. Though I'm a native Hoosier who grew up in Alexandria, Ind., (population 5,000), I've also lived in Plymouth and Anderson, Ind., New York City and Syracuse, N.Y., Louisville, Ky., Miami, Fla. and Princeton, N.J. over the past 25 years.

After renting a house in Bloomington, Ind. for five years, this summer we bought our own home. While I can confirm that a few select boxes have participated in all those moves over the years, this time it appears they are staying not only in the same city but even the same zip code. My co-workers at the Family Literacy Center accuse me of responding to almost every caller by saying, "Yes, I know your area code...or zip code...I used to live in that area..."

Although I don't have the opportunity to correspond with Junior Partners, my job does involve exchanging many letters and electronic mail messages with Senior Partners, the teachers of Junior Partners, and potential Senior Partners. Based on this flurry of correspondence and the experience of one year as Senior Partners in Education coordinator, I would offer this observation: letters *are* gifts. The writer gives of oneself when he/she writes a letter. It's pleasant and even exciting to receive a letter.

Joyce McMahan Cookman

Conversely, there is sadness when no letter arrives. Junior Partners aren't the only ones who feel this sadness. Senior Partners look forward to the letters as much as the Juniors. Therefore, all Partners, remember your commitment.

Senior Partners, understand that not all Junior Partners will revel in the writing experience, at least initially. They may not write very much. For some students, especially the youngest students, the physical act of writing is exhausting.

Teachers, be tolerant of students' technique. Senior Partners are. (particularly the ones who are retired teachers.)

Some of the best gifts I have ever received have been letters. Many of those "gifts" were from Senior Partners. I won't name names but they adorn my bulletin board in my office, including print-outs of e-mail, with return addresses that say Atlanta, Ga., Chicago Heights, Ill., Lake Orion, Mich., Deming, N.M., Mendon, Ohio, etc. I post them to cheer me, to inspire me and to remind me I must constantly consider ways to improve the Senior Partners program.

It's time to close this letter. Best wishes for a wonderful year of communication.

Sincerely,

Joyce

P.S. Write back.

Very Important Partners

North Carolina pupils treasure their senior partner, Ms Alice

By Joyce McMahan Cookman

Her daughter urged her, "Go ahead, Mom. Take a room. You should luck out on a couple or three."

"A ROOM? A WHOLE ROOM?" Despite her daughter's speculation, that still was Senior Partner Alice Martinmaki's very capitalized response when first asked if she would write to Jane Stilwell's entire class of first and second graders in Chatham County, N.C.

But as her daughter predicted, Mrs. Martinmaki, of Chicago Heights, Ill., did luck out, as did Mrs. Stilwell's students. Mrs. Martinmaki gained 29 Junior Partners who enthusiastically responded to her letters and bestowed upon her the highest accolade from Mrs. Stilwell: "I am extremely happy with my Senior Partner.," she wrote. "I request to keep her."

Request granted

Thus for the second year Mrs. Martinmaki finds herself as the treasured Senior Partner for another group of Mrs. Stilwell's students.

Mrs. Martinmaki, who describes herself as a "gabby 80-year-old who never grew up," bubbles over as she talks about her Junior Partners. "They sent me such beautiful drawings and colorings. They also sent me books they had made."

Mrs. Martinmaki especially enjoyed seeing how individual students progressed as the year went by. "Sometimes Mrs. Stilwell would add a note, telling me what letters or words students were trying to write. As the year went on you could see the improvements as they developed their skills."

For her part, Mrs. Martinmaki enjoyed telling the children about funny moments from her childhood, games she played or the memory of moving from Wisconsin to the Chicago area as a six-year-old.

A letter for read-aloud time

As for Mrs. Stilwell, she summed up her students Senior Partner in one word: "Delightful".

"She would send the class a different postcard each week," Mrs. Stilwell said. Then she would write a longer letter, which would cover two or three days time. Mrs. Martinmaki has continued that tradition for Mrs. Stilwell's students this year, and is already entertaining them with long letters about her dog and other topics.

The day Mrs. Stilwell was interviewed, she had just completed reading one of those longer letters to her students during their regular "read-aloud time", a time she normally uses to read to her children from various books.

"Her longer letters are so interesting and so well written that an education professional observing my class who heard one commented that Ms. Alice was a writer whose stories should be published," Mrs. Stilwell said.

Summertime correspondent

Students got to know Mrs. Martinmaki through her letters, the pictures she sent, and the stories she told. Mrs. Stilwell has created a bulletin board display again about Mrs. Martinmaki, and mentioned the class Senior Partner in a letter to parents.

"She was always thinking about us, even through the summer, and again recently with the effects of Hurricane Fran. (The Chatham County school did not sustain damage but many area residents, Mrs. Stilwell included, were without electricity and water for nearly a week.)

"Mrs. Martinmaki continued to write to members of last year's class over the summer and also wrote to the students who were enrolled in my summer school class," Mrs. Stilwell said.

"I applied for a small grant to provide some extra materials for my students to use as a part of the Senior Partner program," Mrs. Stilwell noted. Fittingly, it is titled, "The Amazing Ms. Alice" grant.

Letters to Children

Most Senior Partners can readily think of topics to include in their letters to Junior Partners. Sometimes, though, beginning writers may want some suggestions. That's why each month we'll provide these sample letters, to assist and inspire senior writers in their individual efforts.

AGES 3-5

Dear Steven,

It must be very exciting to be in kindergarten. Do you have any animals in your classroom such as a guinea pig or fish? If so, do they have names? When my son was in nursery school, the room "pet" was a guinea pig named Licorice. Can you guess what color fur Licorice had?

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 6-8

Dear Rebecca,

Would you write me a letter, describing your classroom this year? I would even like a drawing that shows where the desks are and which one is yours. You can mark it with an X, like a map, and tell me what treasures are hiding in your desk!

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 9-12

Dear Patrick,

Did you do any traveling this past summer? Go on any camping trips? When I was your age, we didn't go to a campground or a park but my sisters and I did pitch a tent in our backyard. One night we camped out in the tent and stayed up late playing Monopoly. In the middle of the game, plunk! Down came the tent!

AGES 13-16

Dear Deborah,

It occurred to me as I began this letter that you will soon be old enough to apply for your driver's license. How do you feel about that? Do you look forward to the day when you can drive a car or does the thought of driving make you nervous? Does your school offer a drivers' education course? Has anyone taught you how to drive yet? Since I grew up in the country, my dad actually let me drive when I was 13-years-old, but of course that wasn't on a city street or big highway, it was on a country lane. Most of the boys in my class probably were younger than that when they were driving tractors. How times have changed.

Your Senior Partner,

BOOK CORNER

Many books use letter-writing as a topic or as a thematic device. Here are a few titles to consider:

FOR AGES 3 & UP:

Dear Mr. Blueberry

Written and illustrated by Simon James, Margaret K. McElderry Books, New York, 1991,$12.95.

"Dear Mr. Blueberry," Emily writes to her teacher. " I love whales very much and I think I saw one in my pond today. Please send me some information on whales."

Children everywhere will sympathize with Emily and, like her, will learn some basic facts about these great creatures through this exchange of letters with Mr. Blueberry.

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

The Dove's Letter

Written and illustrated by Keith Baker, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1988,$14.95.

As a dove tries to deliver an unaddressed letter she finds to its rightful owner, she brings great pleasure to each person who reads it.

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea

By Vera B. Williams and Jennifer Williams, Greenwillow Books, New York, 1988, $11.95.

The capsule summary of this book states: "Stringbean describes his trip to the west coast in a series of postcards." It's true, he does. But oh, what interesting and funny descriptions do those postcards contain, and what entertaining illustrations are used in this book.

FOR AGES 12 & UP:

Letters from a Slave Girl

The Story of Harriet Jacobs

By Mary E. Lyons, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1992,$14.95.

Written in fictional letter form, this book is based on Harriet Jacobs' own 1861 autobiography, which revealed in detail what thousands of African-American women endured in the United States during the era of slavery.

Though she faced many ordeals as she struggled to gain her freedom, Ms Jacobs was empowered with one very strong weapon–she had been taught how to read as a young girl. The book's content makes it most appropriate for mature readers.

FOR SENIOR PARTNER READERS:

Gift of a Letter

By Alexandra Stoddard, Doubleday, New York, 1990, $15.00.

Last May Senior Partner Doretta Swinson of Bloomington, Ind. recommended this book. In June syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman referred to it in one of her articles. In July a feature story from the Scripps Howard News Service cited it. These veteran writers believe this little book has big things to say.

Sections of Stoddard's book are devoted to the pleasures of both sending and receiving letters, the importance of "touching those you love" through jotted notes, and even the aesthetic joys of the perfect writing paper.

Stoddard also writes in her book, "Unfortunately, letter writing is becoming a lost art, and letter writers are all too rare..."

Books to Share

Teach a Child to Read with Children's Books

by Mark B.Thogmartin

Learning how to read doesn't have to be difficult or boring for your child. This book combines story reading, phonics and writing to promote reading success. The guide is appropriate for grades PreK-2. It includes easy-to-use record-keeping and lesson plan forms.

Order number: WP-109-1633

$19.95

Connect! How to Get Your Kids to Talk to You

by Carl B. Smith with Susan Moke and Marjorie R. Simic

This practical guide shows parents how to bring their family closer through shared reading and how to support their children's academic and emotional development.

Order number: WP-100-1265

$14.95

To order these books, call:
1-800-925-7853

Parents and Children Together Online

A Magazine for Parents and Children on the Worldwide Web

Share the joy of reading with a child through this online publication. If you have Internet access you can obtain *Parents and Children Together* free through the ERIC clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication Web site. You'll find original stories and articles for parents and children to share together, as well as articles on parenting and book reviews of the latest children's literature. Children can join in the storytellling in the "Global Campfire" writing forum.

Access *Parents and Children* at: **http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/pcto/menu.html**

To receive more information about Parents and Children Together Online or for assistance in accessing the Web site, call:
Chris Essex
1-800-759-4723

To become a Senior Partner or for more information about Senior Partners in Education, call:
Joyce McMahan Cookman
1-800-759-4723

or write:
The Family Literacy Center
2805 East 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698

e-mail:jcookman@indiana.edu

WORD PLAY

Letters Never Written

Here are some letters that were *probably* never written. Create some of your own fictitous letters and enclose one to a Partner. Omit the letter-writer's name and see if your Partner can guess who the pretend correspondent might be. Silliness is not only allowed, it's encouraged!

Dear Father,

While doing my chores today, I decided to take on an additional task. I have provided us with some extra firewood for the coming winter. You will find cherry logs neatly stacked at the back of the house.

Your loving son,
George

Dear Mr. Watson:

I have taken the action of writing you this letter because you never seem to answer when I call you on the telephone.

On hold until I hear from you,
Alexander Graham Bell

Dear Mr. Longfellow:

Please put this information in writing. I keep getting it confused.

Is it one if by land and two if by sea?

Two if by land and one if by sea?

Three if by land and none if by sea?

One if by Land Rover and two if by Skidoo?

Awaiting an answer,
Paul Revere

Dear Mrs. Kitten:

Good news! We found your children's mittens. You may pick them up at the Lost and Found Desk.

Mall Management

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 28 / OCTOBER 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

History in the Making

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

You are a work in progress. You are history in the making. No matter your age, you are writing history with each decision you make, aren't you? That makes you an intensely interesting character.

Even more interesting, you bring to your life the genes and the history of your ancestors. The events of today are not isolated. They are surrounded by your parents, grandparents, and the experiences you have piled up in your memory. Some of those ancestors and histories may fascinate your junior partners. Some are interesting only to you.

The children you write to might like to hear about some of the special events from your life or the lives of your predecessors. More importantly, they would like you to show an interest in the events of their lives and their histories. You can express your interest most naturally after you have written about something from your own background.

For instance, I used to hide in trees

Please see "History" on page 2

Eight-month-old Renee Rink, daughter of Jon and Roberta Rink of Washington, Ind., captured the attention and hearts of visitors to her grandparents' pumpkin stand at the Bloomington, Ind. Farmers Market. Renee is the fourth generation of the Rink family farm..

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History made and recorded

on a vacant lot near my boyhood home. Whether in playing hide-and-seek games or in hiding from a neighborhood bully, I loved to climb into the leafy branches of one of those trees. No one could find me there. I wrote about that hiding place to one of my junior partners, who then told me: " I hide in a place between our garage and the next one. I can read or play with my dolls there. No one knows that I am there." What are the special hiding places of the young children that you write to?

Give your writing partners ideas on how they can collect the memories and the feelings of their grandparents and other older relatives or older neighbors. Children usually want to know what life was like in the olden days and are curious about the differences between their present life and that of their grandparents or great-grandparents. My own children, for example, sat amazed when my father told them about his life in the hills of Kentucky during the early days of this century. His only transportation there was a mule.

Here are some questions that children could ask older relatives or friends:

What's the best memory you have from your childhood?

Where did your parents or grandparents live when you were a child?

What was the scariest thing that happened to you as a child?

How did you meet grandpa or grandma ?

Where is the most interesting place that you have been?

Who is the funniest person you have known?

Will you write the best thing that you remember about me ?

These questions can stimulate others that may produce stories and descriptions from the older person. It would be great fun if the child could get his or her grandparent or older friend to write some answers. That way the child can re-read them and can share them directly with others--you, for example.

Questioning grandparents and older friends is only one way to learn information about the past. More personally, it enables children to sense some of their own family history; not the boring dates of birth and death, but the memorable events and feelings that our ancestors can relate. We are all intrigued by our roots, even young children. If children can get personal tidbits from the past, they can fill in more details as their curiosity and opportunity allow.

Exploring the memories of their elders may give our junior partners some sparkling stories to write to us. In their own personal development, the children will begin to realize that they are part of a history that they are still making.

THE Write Partner

Senior Partners in Education is a program of the Family Literacy Center at Indiana University. Senior Partners uses the experience and good will of seniors to assure children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. The Family Literacy Center is a non-profit organization.

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Books to Share

Grammar Handbook for Home and School

Elementary Grammar: A Child's Resource Book

Intermediate Grammar: A Student's Resource Book

All three reference books by Carl B. Smith, Grayson Bernard Publishers, Bloomington, Ind., 1993, Softcover, 306 pp., $16.95.

At home or at school, these guides will help students to find quick answers to questions about grammar and punctuation, gain a better understanding of sentence structure, learn and review grammatical principles, and improve writing and speaking for every purpose.

The Confident Learner

By Marjorie R. Simic, Melinda McClain and Michael Shermis, Grayson Bernard Publishers, Bloomington, Ind., 1992, Softcover, 131 pp., $9.95.

A confident learner is a child with a positive attitude who goes to school ready to learn. Parents learn to help their children develop these attributes:

+ high self-esteem
+ strong motivation
+ self-discipline
+ good health and fitness
+ the ability to deal with stress

The book includes practical advice, answers to parents' questions, fun family activities, and lists of books to read and share.

To order books from GRAYSON BERNARD Press, please call 1-800-925-7853.

These students await a Senior Partner:

17 seventh graders in Niantic, Ill.; 8 second graders in the Bronx, N.Y.; 13 fourth graders in Collinsville, Ill.; 36 eighth graders in San Diego, Calif.; 20 sixth-eighth graders in Ipswich, Mass. (with e-mail access); 5 fifth graders in Crozet, Va. (with e-mail access); 24 seventh graders in Adelphi, Md.

Please encourage family members, friends, co-workers and members of church groups or community organizations to become Senior Partners. The $12 fee may be shared. Please contact:

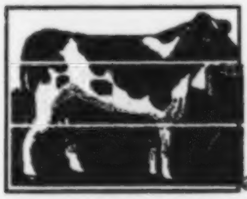
Joyce McMahan Cookman
Senior Partners in Education
by phone: 800-759-4723 *by fax: 812-855-4220* *by e-mail: jcookman@indiana.edu*
by mail: c/o Family Literacy Center 2805 E. 10th St. Bloomington, IN 47408-2698

Very Important Partners

Letters Bring History to Life

By Joyce McMahan Cookman

Last year Senior Partner Dorothy Davis, a retired elementary school teacher from Celina, Ohio, wrote an entire third grade class in Fairland, Oklahoma. She agreed to share her wonderful letters with *Write Partner* readers. Within Mrs. Davis' letters, she weaves tales of of the past while also appealing to young readers' interests in the present. Here are three of of the 13 letters she composed.



Dear Children,

Today I want to tell you about the farm I lived on when I was eight. We would call it a "family farm" now. We raised almost all the food we needed. Mother always had 30 or 40 chickens. Some of them laid eggs and some were to fry for special fried chicken dinners.

In the barn were stalls for two horses (named Dan and Lark). Father used them to help with the farming, but he also had a small tractor. Lark was a buggy horse also and pulled our buggy during the winter when the roads were too bad for the car.

We also had five or six milk cows in the barn and each spring there would be some new baby calves. In another part was a pen for pigs. Father had two or three sows and each spring each would have 8 to 10 baby pigs. In another shed we had almost a dozen sheep. All the animals spent most of their time in the big pasture field behind the barn.

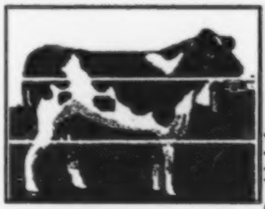
Each morning and evening Father and Mother would milk the cows by hand. Sometimes I took my tin cup to the barn and father would fill it with fresh warm milk straight from the cow.

The "upstairs" part of the barn (called a haymow) was always full of loose hay for the animals to eat in the winter. On one side of the barn was a corn crib full of ears of corn for them and a smaller bin of oats for the horses.

In the summer we raised a big garden. What food items do you think we still had to buy at the store?

Love from,

Mrs. Davis



Dear Children,

Here is a question for you. Why didn't my mother need a garbage disposal? Answer: Because she had chickens! Sounds silly, doesn't it? But it was really true. Our chickens were kept in a fenced-in chicken yard. They could eat a little grass and some bugs but they needed more. Every evening Mother took them a small pan of grain, cracked corn or wheat. She also fed the chickens all of her table scraps and potato peelings. They would eat almost all of them.

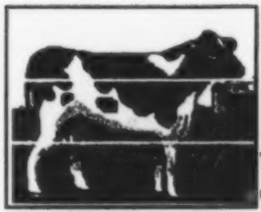
I liked to visit the hen house and gather eggs. Our hen house was only about as big as your classroom. The floor was dirt-covered with a small amount of loose straw. (Where does straw come from? Right, wheat and oats.) Along the back wall were several long poles. They were closer to the center of the building. The next one was a little higher and farther back. They were placed like the bleachers at the ball game. The hens would roost on these poles at night. As soon as the room was dark they would cluck softly to themselves and settle on the poles to rest. Hens didn't like to be disturbed at night. If you went inside the henhouse after they were settled on the poles the hens would get very excited. The would squawk and fly around your head!

The other walls were lined with small boxes about chest high. These had straw inside for a soft nest. Most hens were smart enough to lay eggs in the boxes. Sometimes one would decide to stay on the nest all the time and hatch some baby chicks. Those hens would scratch and peck anyone who tried to gather the eggs.

Most of the time they left the nest after laying an egg. Hens usually lay one egg a day. Sometimes another hen will use the nest too. Often you'd find three or four eggs in one nest. Eggs break easily so we had to be careful when we gathered them. Many farm women wore big aprons and they gathered up their apron like a basket to carry eggs back to the house. I felt very important when I was trusted to gather eggs.

Wouldn't it be fun if we had a 1930's henhouse so you and I could gather eggs?

Love from Mrs. Davis



Dear Children,

Do you know any adults who jog or do other exercises? When I was your age there was more "hard" work for people. I mean work which was exercise.

Every day Father pumped many buckets of water for the horses and other animals. The pump was near the house so he carried the water to the barn. This was like lifting weights, wasn't it?

In summer the cattle ate grass and other plants in our pasture fields. Dad made hay for them to eat in winter. He had a riding mower to cut the hay. Then he used a pitch fork to turn the hay so it would dry evenly. After it was dry he pitched it onto a large wagon and hauled it to the barn. Sometimes they pitched it into the haymow. Even after it was in the mow, the men had to move the hay back so that the entire mow was full.

Some farmers had other machines to help make hay. Hay loaders put the hay onto wagons. Huge slings worked with ropes and pulleys to lift hay into the mows. Other farmers baled their hay and lifted and stacked big bales. Any way you made hay it was a lot of exercise . Most farmers had really strong muscles.

There were two ways farmers usually harvested corn. One was to husk the ears one at a time and toss them into the wagon. The other way was to cut and shock the corn like the pictures you see in the fall. The shocks had to be shucked (taking each ear out of the corn husks) but this could be done later in the winter. Either way was hard work.

When Father finished his own corn he sometimes helped a neighbor. He earned 25 cents to cut and shock corn for a whole day. Candy bars or ice cream cones cost 5 cents each. How many ice cream cones could he buy if he worked all day? Of course Father had to use the money for things we needed more than ice cream.

(Editor's note: In another letter, Mrs. Davis mentioned this related description of corn husking.)

In the fall farmers would often have a corn husking bee. They brought shocks of corn into the barn and everyone gathered round to husk out ears. If a young man found an ear of red corn (most were yellow) he was allowed to kiss the girl of his choice. When the work was done there'd be a picnic supper.

Love from Mrs. Davis

BOOK CORNER

Though this month's reviews look at books about learning about the past and present from our older relatives, October 's celebration of Halloween can't be overlooked.

FOR AGES 3 & UP:

Grandpa's Garden Lunch

By Judith Caseley, Greenwillow Press, New York, 1990.

After helping Grandpa in the garden, Sarah and her grandparents enjoy a lunch made from home-grown vegetables.

Dinosaurs' Halloween

By Liza Donnelly, Scholastic, New York, 1987.

An encounter with a fellow trick or treater whose dinosaur costume is remarkably realistic gives a boy a Halloween full of surprises.

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

My Grandmother's Journey

By John Cech, Illustrated by Sharon McGinley-Nally, Bradbury Press, New York, 1991.

A grandmother tells the story of her eventful life in early 20th century Europe and her arrival in the U.S. after World War II. The story is based on the life of Feodosia Ivanova Belevtsov, born in pre-revolutionary Russia in 1907, survivor of the Russian Revolution, years of civil war, the Stalin purges, the famines of the 1930s, and capture by the retreating Nazis.

The Wooden Doll

By Susan Banners, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York, 1989.

Visiting her grandparents, Stephanie learns the origins of Grandpa's beautiful wooden doll.

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

Johnny May

By Robbie Branscum, Doubleday & Co., New York, 1975.

A 9-year-old girl recounts her experiences growing up in the Arkansas hill country in the late 1940's. The author grew up in those Arkansas hills where she attended a one-room school until the seventh grade, then completed her education in public libraries. Other Johnny May stories include "The Adventures of Johnny May" (1984), when the young heroine struggles against great odds to provide for her grandparents at Christmas, and "Johnny May Grows Up" (1987), when the now 13-year-old Johnny May comes of age, realizing that her attempt at self-improvement is for her own gratification, not just to please her boyfriend.

Gorgonzola's Revenge

By Karen Wallace, Illustrated by Judy Brown, Barron's, Hauppauge, N.Y., 1996.

Gorgonzola is over a hundred years old and a ghost mouse, shiny and silvery like a teaspoon. She was also the head of the family and all the other ghost mice looked up to her. She believed that ghosts should have a keen sense of their own history and ghost mice were no exception.

FOR AGES 12 & UP:

My Backyard History Book

a Brown Paper School book

By David Weitzman, Illustrated by James Robertson, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1992..

This book shows how to collect and preserve the present for fun in the future, It suggests that the past lies all around us, from attics to old recipes to cemeteries to memories of relatives and neighbors. It recommends "draw it, photograph it, write it down, sing it."

Letters to Children

Did you find it difficult beginning your first letter to your Junior Partner? Your Junior Partner might feel the same when writing a response. Here are some sample letters, in case you'd like an idea to get you started.

AGES 3-5

Dear Sierra,

If I'm not mistaken, October is Fire Prevention month. Has your class visited a fire station? Or did a firefighter come to your school and talk to your class?

When my son was in pre-school his class visited a fire station. We watched a firefighter show how he slid down a brass pole from their upstairs sleeping area to the fire trucks. Don't you think that would be fun?

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 6-8

Dear Senta,

Happy Halloween! Do you have your costume ready?

We have many Trick or Treaters who come to our house. I think I gave away almost 80 pieces of candy last year!

I like to decorate our front porch with orange lights, a scarecrow, cornstalks and a Jack O'lantern,of course. Every year I add a few more decorations.

Please send me a drawing of the face on your pumpkin. I promise I won't be scared. (Well, maybe a little.)

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 9-12

Dear Gary,

Thinking about Halloween brings back some very pleasant memories for me. I like to recall the Halloween parties that I had.

The parties were always held in our basement. It wasn't a very fancy place since it was unfinished–concrete block walls, not much heat, cobwebs. But my dad would bring in cornstalks for decorations and my mother would serve donuts and cider to my guests and I thought it was great.

My dad was a good storyteller and he'd always tell a "spooky" story as part of the entertainment.

What do you think–do you think you and your friends would enjoy a Halloween party like that?

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 13-16

Dear Andre,

When I discovered that your school was in Maryland, it made me think about a crazy cousin –Doesn't every family have a crazy cousin???–of ours who lived in Maryland.

This man collected antique clocks and he had them displayed all over his house. However, he didn't set them on the same time. Instead, he set them to ring or chime at different times, so he could count them, to make sure they were all still there!

Do you have a collection of anything? Trading cards? CD's by a particular musical performer? Collections can provide us with interesting history lessons.

Your Senior Partner,

WORD PLAY

What's in a name?

Match the definitions to the words hiding within these Junior and Senior Partners' names:

ASHLEY
RICHARD
MARC
SAMANTHA
COLIN
GREGORY

BLAKE
JUSTIN
TABITHA
STEPHEN
JASMINE
ADENA

1. A body of water
2. Female chicken
3. Opposite of out
4. What you owe, your bill
5. Wealthy
6. Opposite of woman
7. Gruesome
8. Not yours
9. Small amount
10. Type of tree
11. On a ladder or stairs
12. Swiss vegetable
13. Arched or curved
14. Little laugh
15. Bears' winter home

Do you know someone who would like to be a Senior Partner?

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THE Write Partner

ISSUE 29 / NOVEMBER 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

Gathering around the table

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

When my dad was 85 years old, he had 32 people to his house for Thanksgiving dinner. He himself had cooked Thanksgiving dinner for his family for 40 years—since my mother died—because Dad believed that it was important for keeping the family together. After he led the family in his simple prayer of thanksgiving, we all filed past the buffet style arrangement in his kitchen before sitting to eat here and there in his small house.

His prayer was basically this:

Thank you, God, for all that you have given us, especially this food, and especially the blessing of having us all here together. Amen.

Over a 40 year period neither the prayer nor the food varied from year to year. It was indeed a family ritual, a ritual that became so much a part of the family, that now that Dad is dead one of his grandchildren brings us together at her house for Thanksgiving dinner and family celebration.

Fifth grade students of Ms Wendy Tamborrino at Binford Elementary School in Bloomington, Ind., entertained family and fellow students with their play about Governor Bradford and the Plymouth colonists.

Please see "Gathering" on page 2

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Gathering around the table

Good food, good company

Gathering to celebrate with good food is a practice that the human community repeats all around the world and throughout history. Hunters and their families gathered to celebrate a good hunt; farmers, to celebrate the harvest; sailors to celebrate a successful voyage; families, to celebrate their solidarity.

What makes our Thanksgiving Day so attractive is that as a nation we set aside this time to be thankful for whatever we have. And we express those thanks in the midst of our family, our relatives, our friends. It is a day of warmth and reassurance. Those kinds of days seem important to our spirit, probably especially important to children. We all need to sense that we are part of a community that has an underlying base of friendship and goodness.

Letters reassure

Our letters and cards to young people can convey to children that they are part of a caring community, a community that has friendly rituals, rituals that support them. Our monthly letters may be seen as a kind of one-on-one ritual. Each month a child receives a letter that conveys optimism and encouragement. Each month a child is reminded that his or her senior pen pal wants him to succeed in school and in life.

We are not suggesting that your letters should simply repeat the same phrases over and over like a memorized prayer. We are suggesting, however, that your letters will be anticipated, perhaps not for their cleverness, just for what they represent—a regular message of care, a reassurance that the adult community truly values the life and activity of its younger members.

Thanksgiving and other holidays across the year may give you an opportunity to tell your pen pal that you have a special greeting for them related to the holiday. Wish them blessings and remind them that family and neighbors need them just as they need family and neighbors. Encourage them to speak out with a happy greeting and perform some act of kindness or friendship on these holidays when people naturally gather to celebrate special events.

Wouldn't it be fascinating to learn how other families gather to celebrate different holidays? Put your pen pal in a festive mood by having him or her survey a half dozen friends and then report the results to you in the next letter. Do they always do certain things? Do they have the same food year after year? What do the adults do? What do the children do?

THE Write Partner

Senior Partners in Education is a program of the Family Literacy Center at Indiana University. Senior Partners uses the experience and good will of seniors to assure children of their intrinsic value and encourage them to learn and succeed. The Family Literacy Center is a non-profit organization.

Director: Dr. Carl B. Smith

Editor: Joyce McMahan Cookman

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Letters to Children

At a recent workshop, Dr. Carl Smith asked the teacher participants to try their hand at writing some sample Junior Partner letters. He suggested they look for content ideas among magazines or imagine themselves "wearing different hats" to represent different moods. Here are some examples:

AGES 3-5

Dear Buddy,

(The writer enclosed a picture from a magazine that showed pictures of a whale, polar bear and gorilla.)

Do you like to go to the zoo? I do! I like to read about animals which I've seen at the zoo.

Doesn't the gorilla look mean?

I think the polar bear is tired.

What do you think?

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 6-8

Dear Andrew,

I heard from your teacher that you enjoy sports. What sport is your favorite? I always enjoy watching baseball games on T.V. Do you like baseball? What games do you play during recess time?

Please write back soon.

Your Senior Partner,

P.S. Use the envelope with stamp that I sent you. Thanks.

AGES 9-12

Dear Brian,

What do you think of this ad? I saw it in National Geographic. Are you a friend of the earth? Do you care about recycling? What do you do, if anything? What about the animals (pictured in the ad)? How many can you identify? Let me know your guesses. I will send you my guesses next time!! See you soon. :)

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 13-16

Dear Beth,

Your new theatre class sounds great! I'm sure you can add a great deal to the activities and learn by watching the other students.

You have so many wonderful ideas that I'm sure you'll have an opportunity to use them on stage some day. For now, the people behind stage are the lucky ones!

Your Senior Partner,

ANY AGE LEVEL

(The writer enclosed a picture of cocoa and a chocolate chip cookie.)

Dear Jean,

I love anything chocolate! Do you? This picture makes me hungry!

What is your favorite food?

Your Senior Partner,

Very Important Partners

Bronx class a cultural stew

By Joyce McMahan Cookman

Excuse me? Is this the United Nations? After all, this is New York City. And the room seems a bubbling blend of accents.

No, instead this young delegation is Mrs. Susan Aker's class of second graders at P.S. 105 in the Bronx. When Mrs. Aker describes this group of Junior Partners and their school as "multicultural", it's almost an understatement.

"Albanian, Russian, Puerto Rican, Honduran, Dominican, Chinese, Korean, East Indian-Guianian, African-American...," Mrs. Aker ticks off the varied backgrounds of her students. With 30 students, she worries that she's forgotten to mention someone's country or culture.

The lingua franca

Despite the difference in their language experiences, this is not an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. The "lingua franca" of Mrs. Aker's room is English. With the exception of one student who recently joined the class after being in an ESL class and so is still in transition, all of the students readily speak, read and write in English.

"Language is the basis for everything," Mrs. Aker believes, " and the children need a common language, whether they are reading stories, studying maps or learning number facts."

"We use many state-of-the-art education methods," Mrs. Aker said, citing the Chicago Math program as one example. While it involves plentiful use of manipulatives or physical objects to help students understand math concepts , the children still need language to process that knowledge.

The class' use of the Columbia Writing Program fits well with their letter-writing to Senior Partners. The Columbia program helps students learn about different genres, Mrs. Aker explained, "and one of those genres is letter-writing." The Columbia program encourages these young writers to consider not only their technical skills in writing a letter but also to think about who their audience is for the letter. "They learn that letters even 'look different' from other kinds of writing," Mrs. Aker said.

Midwestern Partners

So what do these children think about their audience, their Senior Partners who primarily reside in the Midwestern states of Indiana and Illinois?

"They can't believe there are people who have lives that are really not so different from their own,"Mrs. Aker laughed. "Since one of the Senior Partners lives in Chicago, the children are able to visualize her urban surroundings, similar to their own. This has been a wonderful opportunity to look at maps and find the locations of some of the Indiana writers but the suburban and rural areas are more difficult for the students to imagine."

Language everywhere

The students enjoy reading their letters to each other or to the entire class. Soon they will be able to display their letters from Senior Partners on a bulletin board, if they chose.

The display of letters fits in perfectly with the rest of the classroom. Mrs. Aker likes her room to be "a nice environment with lots of color and print all over the place. Wherever, you look, there's something to read."

P.S. 105 is a large school with 1400 students in grades K-5. The multicultural atmosphere of Mrs. Aker's class corresponds to the neighborhood, known for its array of ethnic food and clothing shops.

"We don't have the opportunity to do cooking projects in the classroom," Mrs. Aker said, but the students bring in interesting and delectable recipes." One of her favorites was a recipe for flan, the sweet custard with carmel topping, a speciality of Latino kitchens.

Noting this willingness among her students to share their lives, Mrs. Aker said, "The children love to tell stories and enjoy talking about their families. They also have a wonderful sense of humor, and it shows up when it's least expected. I enjoy being with them."

Along the Network

Best wishes to Senior Partner Gary Hill of Salem, Oregon. Mr. Hill's medical treatment necessitated he give up his partnership while he focuses on full recovery but his wife Beverly Hill continues to write students of Shelley Musgrave in Wells, Texas.

Fourth grade teacher Denise Gruber-Tiemann goes on maternity leave soon. While her students in Collinsville, Illinois will miss her, they promise to continue to write their Senior Partners faithfully.

Bless them, teacher Patricia Black says about the Senior Partners who write her fifth graders in Grants, New Mexico. Citing just one example, Ms. Black described one of her students who had never written more than a sentence or two. "However, when he received his letter from Senior Partner Daniel Hankee, the boy sat down and wrote a page and a half response, without stopping," Ms. Black said. Hankee, currently a resident of Bloomington, Ind., is one of 125 Indiana University Honors Division students volunteering as Senior Partners this year.

It's somewhat Greek to me. Members of three Indiana University sororities have signed on as Senior Partners. The women of Kappa Kappa Gamma, Pi Beta Phi and Delta Gamma have organized groups of Senior Partners in their houses to write to students in the Bronx, N.Y., Niantic, Ill., El Cajon, Calif., Crozet, Va., Collinsville, Ill. and Adelphi, Md.

Senior Partner Devon O'Brien of Aloha, Oregon, is staying busy at her keyboard. She's writing via e-mail to individual students in Crozet, Va. and Adelphi, Md., as well as Mrs. Marcia Nguyen's entire class of second graders in Spencer, Ind.

If you are matched with a third grade student of Richard Siegelman in Oyster Bay, N.Y. and haven't received a response to your letters, here's why: While all class members are matched, not all had received letters as of Nov. 21. Rather than have some children feel left out, Mr. Siegelman is holding all other letters until every child has a letter.

As always, there are many students hoping to become Junior Partners. They include 14 seventh grade boys, students of Vicki Groff and Marilyn Barber in Adelphi, Md. (with e-mail access); 6 seventh grade boys, students of Valerie Brunner in Niantic, Ill.; 65 eighth graders, students of Mary Ellen Walther in El Cajon, Calif.; 5 secondary school girls, students of Bonnie Wilson in Peoria, Ill.

BOOK CORNER

Beware! Some of these book reviews may make you hungry. Let's see what's cooking in the library:

FOR AGES 3 &UP:

One Tough Turkey

By Steven Kroll, Illustrated by John Wallner, Holiday House, New York, 1982, $14.95.

A recount of the "real story" of the first Thanksgiving Day when the Pilgrims pursued such tough turkeys for dinner that they had to settle for squash.

Chester Chipmunk's Thanksgiving

By Barbara Williams, Illustrated by Kay Chorao, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1978, $5.95.

Chester Chipmunk can't seem to find anyone to share his Thanksgiving Day dinner.

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

Clever Cooks: A Concoction of Stories, Charms, Recipes and Riddles

Compiled by Ellin Greene, Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., New York, 1973, $7.50.

This anthology brings together a baker's dozen of stories involving clever cooks who outwit fairies, giants, kings and just ordinary people. Interspersed among the stories are charms, riddles and recipes such as Molasses Milkshake and Griddlebread.

Cranberry Thanksgiving

By Wende and Harry Devlin, Four Winds Press, New York, 1971, $14.95 hb, $3.95 pb.

Grandmother almost loses her secret recipe for cranberry bread to one of the guests she and Maggie invite for Thanksgiving Day. (The secret recipe is included.)

The Fairy Tale Cookbook

By Carol MacGregor, Macmillan Publishers, New York, 1982, $8.95.

Ever wanted to sample the Wee Baby Bear's porridge in *Goldilocks*?? Taste a bit of the witch's gingerbread house in *Hansel and Gretel*? Discover the magic of *Strega Nona's* pasta? This is the book for you.

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

The Louisa May Alcott Cookbook

Compiled by Gretchen Anderson, Illustrated by Karen Milone, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1985, $10.95.

These recipes are based on the dishes mentioned in Alcott's classic novels, *Little Women* and *Little Men*. They were recreated from 19th Century cookbooks by the author while she was a nine-year-old enrolled in a gifted and talented program at Haynes Elementary School in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

Family Dinner

By Jane Cutler, Illustrations by Philip Caswell, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, New York, 1991, $13.95.

"How in the world can you have a family if you don't have family dinner?" This is the big question Great-Uncle Benson asks ten-year-old Rachel when he rolls into town for a visit. Rachel is mystified. Her family doesn't do dinner. Soon Uncle Benson is cooking everything from Hundred Garlic Soup to Kansas City, Kansas Macaroni and Cheese Casserole, intent upon luring the family to a communal meal.

First Apple

By Ching Yeung Russell, Boyds Mill Press Honesdale, Pa., 1994, $13.95.

Living in China in the late 1940s, a young girl works to save enough money to buy an apple and give it to her grandmother for her birthday. Neither has ever tasted an apple.

FOR AGES 12 & UP

Eating Their Plates

A Pilgrim Book of Food and Manners

By Lucille Recht Penner, Macmillan, New York, 1991, $14.95.

How about some labscouse? Or maybe a plum duff? You'll find a description of these foods, along with a discussion of the eating habits, customs and manners at the colony of New Plymouth within this book.

The African American Child's Heritage Cookbook

By Vanessa Roberts Parham, Sandcastle Publishing, South Pasadena, CA, 1993, $19.95.

Any age group can use this cookbook! It has large and easy to read text. Ingredients and equipment are clearly stated. Young cooks learn math, time management, safety, and responsibility, while keeping their ethnic cookery heritage alive with African, Creole, Cajun, American Indian and Caribbean recipes.

Books to Share

Parents and Children Together

Books with Audio Cassettes

Created by the Family Literacy Center, Grayson Bernard Publishers, Bloomington, Ind., $10.00.

This series of books with audio cassettes offers a dynamic new way to help parents of children ages 4—10 understand and support their children's development and school performance. Each book with cassette offers:

Answers to parents' questions about learning

Educational advice written by Title I directors and literacy teachers

Fun activities for parents and children to do together

Suggested books for future reading

Two or three delightfully illustrated read-along stories.

One of the titles related to the November issue of *The Write Partner* is **Different Peoples of the World** (Order number A4-900-1147)

To order "Different Peoples" or any of the other 23 titles, please call GRAYSON BERNARD PUBLISHING at 1-800-925-7853.

Parents and Children Together Online

www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/menu.html

Created by Christopher Essex of The Family Literacy Center

This magazine series is also available online on The Family Learning page. Every issue of this award-winning (Seven Internet Awards!) online magazine features:

Original stories and articles

Cuentos en Espanol/Stories in Spanish

The Global Campfire, an interactive, collaborative storytelling opportunity for children

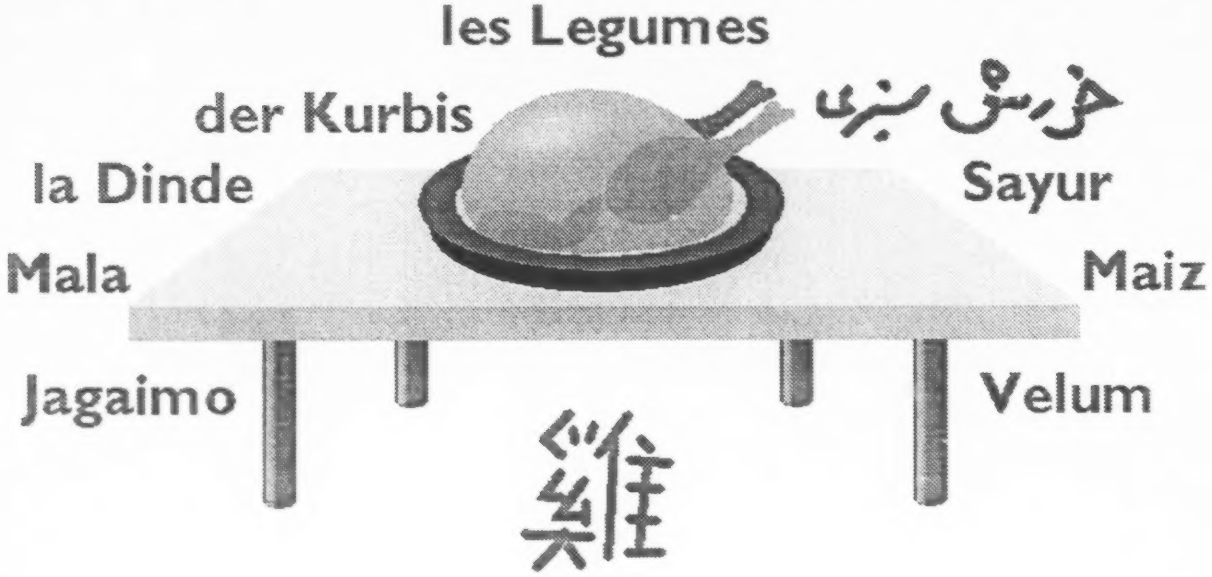
Book reviews for parents and children

Links to other sites of interest for parents, children, educators and children's writers.

WORD PLAY

Please pass the translations

Welcome to our table. How many of these food words can you identify? Enjoy! (Special thanks to Marziah, Mei-Yu, Hassan and Claude.)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THE Write Partner

Issue 30/December 1996

SENIOR PARTNERS in EDUCATION

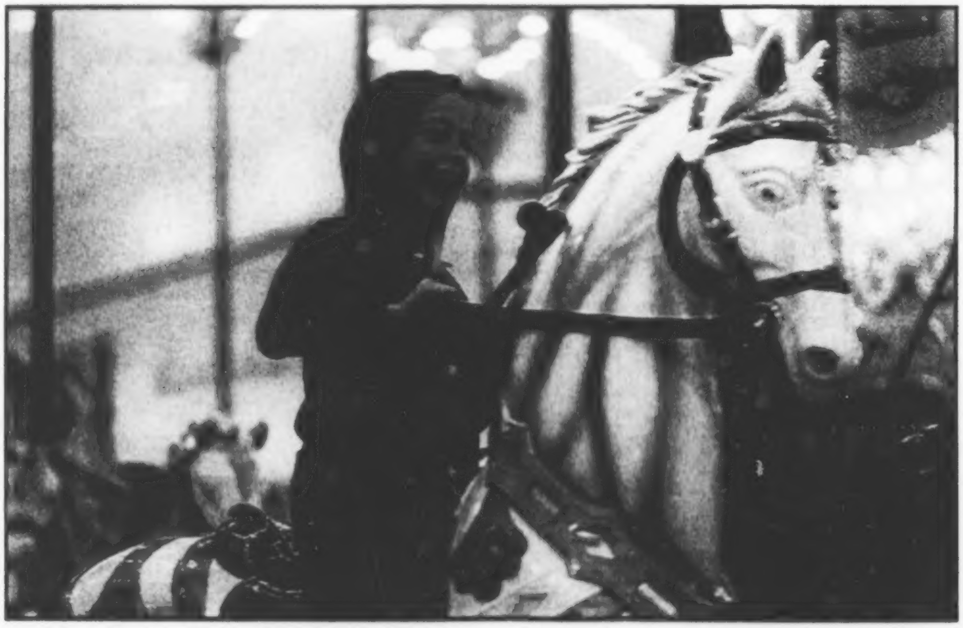
Home for the Holidays

By Dr. Carl B. Smith

From Thanksgiving on past the New Year we hear and think of the many cliches that remind us of the good things that happen around the family: "No place like home"; "Home is where the heart is"; and, of course, "Home for the holidays."

Behind those familiar phrases lies our human need for stability, for a

Please see "Home" on page 2



Flying home, carousel horses take children for a magical ride. The newly built carousel with its old-fashioned look, was installed at the College Mall in Bloomington, Ind. for the holiday season.

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Holidays bring us home

place to go where we expect love and support. Amidst all the hustle, hassle, and uncertainty of life, we like to think that in our home we have a place and a person who respects us for what we are. That's the reason that so many of us return to our roots over the holidays.

Creating a safe place

Just as the saying "home is where the heart is" indicates, we have many ways of creating our safe place. I like to think that what you are doing as a pen pal for young people is building a sense of safety and a sense of support. You offer a young person the realization that someone cares, someone who is not obligated by parentage.

You don't accomplish that feeling by being brilliant or by writing the most dynamic letters your pen pal has ever seen. You build that sense of support bit by bit, month after month with simple statements of friendship and encouragement.

Offer holiday friendship to your pen pal in any way that makes you comfortable—mailing a greeting card, sharing a family story, sending a book or a present, offering a word of good cheer. Probably the best thing you could do would be to send a greeting card and also a personal message. To a child, that means that you have thought of him or her two times in one month. That's truly special.

A surprise call

I got a surprise call a couple of days ago. It was from a young man who had been my pen pal seven years ago. I had not heard from him in three years. When I wrote to him, he was 12; now he's 19.

"I was just thinking about you," he said. "Do you know that I still have that book that you sent me years ago? I read a little of it back then, but I have read it several times recently. I just wanted to say hello at Thanksgiving. I guess I miss your letters. And I know that I stopped writing long before you did."

We talked for about 15 minutes, catching up. I have never seen him face-to-face because I always wrote to him through his school. I do have his picture from when he was 12. He promised to send his picture now. The book I sent him, by the way, was a book on how to study and how to organize things in student life. He had great difficulty getting organized when he was 12. Who didn't?

You never know what your regular actions of support will do for your pen pal.

Have a great holiday!

THE Write Partner

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Letters to Children

It's a busy time of year for Senior Partners. It's also a busy time for Junior Partners (and especially for their teachers.) Many classrooms are practicing holiday programs, wrapping up the first semester, and pulsing with pre-vacation excitement.

This will be a good opportunity to share how you plan to spend the holiday period and ask what activities your Junior Partner has planned. Remember that your Junior Partner's religious or cultural background may be vastly different from your own. These exchanges can provide very educational experiences for both Junior and Senior Partners.

AGES 3-5

Dear Nathan,

Have you written your letter to Santa Claus? What did you ask him to bring you? Don't forget to leave a snack for Santa and his reindeer.

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 6-8

Dear David,

Greetings from Florida! When I saw the television news reports about the weather in Connecticut, I wished that I could send some of this sunshine your way, to keep you warm. Send me some pictures from the newspaper. (Ask Mom first before you start cutting!)

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 9-12

Dear Alexsandra,

What are your plans for the winter break? When I was your age, I always looked forward to going ice skating. Do you like to ice skate and if so, do you go skating on an indoor or outdoor rink?

We skated at an outdoor rink. I was lucky because the rink was close to my house and I could easily walk there. All during vacation I'd jump out of bed almost every morning and rush over to the rink to be there as soon as it opened. Funny thing though—as soon as school started again, my mother practically had to pry me out of bed in the mornings. Have you ever experienced a similar situation?

Your Senior Partner,

AGES 13-16

Dear Marilyn,

I know you've been extremely busy these past few weeks. Didn't you say that besides accompanying the school choir for the winter concert you were playing for your church choir?

I'm really proud of you. I don't play the piano but I have sung in a couple of choirs that performed Handel's *Messiah* so I know the music was difficult and that you had to practice a lot.

Did the audience stand during the *Hallelujah Chorus*? That's an old tradition. The first time I saw an audience do that I was in my high school choir. My friend Beth was standing behind me and she started changing the lyrics. Instead of singing, "For the Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth," she sang, "Why Are They Standing Up?" She sang it softly so the audience couldn't hear, but I certainly had to fight the giggles.

You know what? Thirty years have gone by and my friend Beth still can make me laugh so much my eyes water and my stomach hurts.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday sharing laughter and love with your family and friends.

Your Senior Partner,

Very Important Partners

Home, Home, on the Web

By Joyce McMahan Cookman

The sounds of Senior Partner Richard Farina playing ragtime piano enliven his home in Londonderry, New Hampshire.

Senior Partner James Klibbe recently had to repair part of his home in Raleigh, North Carolina because it sustained hurricane damage.

And Fred Delbridge, who makes his home in far away Brisbane, Australia, has the distinction of being the first international Senior Partner.

Over the next six months these three Senior Partners will acquire second homes. Anyone with a computer and the necessary software will be able to visit when the homes are complete.

Mr. Farina, Mr. Klibbe and Mr. Delbridge have been matched with seventh grade students of Mrs. Pat Harder in Crozet, Va. Joined by nine other older adults, these seniors will be interviewed on-line over the coming weeks. Mrs. Harder's class will write and design home pages about their adult subjects which will eventually appear on the World Wide Web. The pages will contain words,probably pictures...maybe even some audio of Richard Farina's ragtime piano music.

"The students are so facile with the technical aspects of using computer programs," Mrs. Harder observed, "so they aren't apprehensive about that aspect of the project at all."

Last week the students sent introductory letters to their subjects. They have begun composing their first set of interview questions, which will be in the form of comparisons: "What was it like when you were this age? What was a typical meal? What specific remembrances do you have of World War II?"

"The students were very careful preparing letters and questions," Mrs. Harder said. "They proofread and then asked me to proofread," she laughed.

While her students are curious about their senior writers and have already begun to create images in their minds about what they think their Partner might look like, they also wonder about themselves and what image they convey through their words.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"Do they get who I am?" one of Mrs. Harder's students wondered. "Do you think I should mention to my Senior Partner that I have red hair?"his Junior Partner asked.

"I told my students that in the beginning they will be using a rather formal voice,"Mrs. Harder said. " But it will be interesting for them to see how things change over time. Everyone will start off in the same place but end up many different places."

At the end of the project, the students will produce two bound "hard copy" versions of their work, one for the Senior Partner and one for themselves.

Though the home page building has just begun, it is possible to visit the address and see what has been created in the past. If *Write Partner* readers have access to a computer with a World Wide Web browser, just drop by: http://pen.k12.va.us/Anthology/Div/Albemarle/Projects/Seniors.

Along the Network

Some Senior Partners have asked about sending holiday gifts to their Junior Partners. A letter or card is quite sufficient but if you wish to send an extra token here are two recommendations: a bookmark or stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

A bookmark encourages reading, and can be an inexpensive yet personalized item, (Follow the principles of Kwanzaa celebrations which encourage homemade gifts.) Some Junior Partners don't have ready access to envelopes and postage; often their teachers use personal funds so children can write Senior Partners. Sending stamped, addressed envelopes makes a nice gift to both students and teachers. It also encourages speedy replies!

Welcome to Jan Mattea, who has assumed Denise Gruber-Tiemann's position at Webster School in Collinsville, Ill. and congratulations to Mrs. Gruber-Tiemann on the birth of a son.

Also welcome new Junior Partners Nancy, Taneeka, Owdia, Tanesha, Angie and Tomina, students of Bonnie Wilson at St. Anne's High School in Peoria, Ill. Their Senior Partner, Martha Crosby of Ramseur, N.C., sent the Senior Partners in Education coordinator an early holiday gift when she wrote, asking if she couldbe matched with these young ladies she had read about in the November issue of *The Write Partner.* Ms. Crosby already was matched with Junior Partners Scott in Niantic, Ill. and Sabrina in Ipswich, Mass. "I have found that using my computer as a word processor, I do have time to write to several more students," this retired teacher reported.

Knights in shining armor, please apply: Five of Vicki Groff's seventh grade boys in Adelphi, MD, still need Senior Partners. All the girls are matched, have received letters and written responses. However, Mrs. Groff would prefer her students write their letters as a class project. These young guys would especially benefit from male mentors. Likewise, knights are also still needed for six seventh grade boys, students of Valerie Brunner in Niantic, Ill. Mrs. Brunner's students are writing independently.

Californians dreaming on a winter's day for Senior Partners include 65 eighth graders in El Cajon and 15 seventh/eighth graders in Santee.

BOOK CORNER

Many of these books incorporate Christmas into their titles, but their themes can be enjoyed by all, no matter what holiday is being celebrated.

FOR AGES 3 &UP:

Everett Anderson's Christmas Coming

By Lucille Clifton, Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist, Henry Holt and Co., New York, first published in 1971, reprinted with Gilchrist's illustrations, 1991,$14.95, hb, $4.95 pb.

The joyful text, relates in verse a little boy's Christmas in an urban setting—watching snow fall from a 14th floor window, bringing a Christmas tree up on the building elevator, slightly annoying the neighbors below with party revelry.

Father Christmas

By Raymond Briggs, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., New York, 1973, $ 4.95.

Though we know him in the U.S. as Santa Claus, this mostly picture book provides a humorous look at Father Christmas in Britain. The old elf dreams of tropical holidays, mutters about weather forecasts, and has a tendency to grumble, "Blooming soot," and "blooming chimneys." His refers to his reindeer as "deers" out of fondness, not grammatical error.

FOR AGES 5 & UP:

Merry Christmas, Space Case

By James Marshall, Dial Books, New York, 1986, $11.95 hb, $4.99 pb.

Here's a book which really has little to do with Christmas but it's humour certainly provides some holiday cheer. Young Buddy McGee eagerly awaits a promised Christmas visit from his friend, the thing from outer space. His alien friend can't find Buddy at first, since he's spending the day at his Grannie's. However Space Case arrives in time to rescue Buddy from being bullied by the Goober twins next door. We should all have a Grannie like Buddy's, who not only unquestionably welcomes the holiday guest but who also seems quite comfortable attired in a lab coat and adorns her dining room table with test tubes and beakers.

In the Month of Kislev

A Story for Hanukkah

By Nina Jaffe, Illustrated by Louise August, Viking/Penguin Books, New York, 1992, $15.00 hb, $4.99 pb.

A rich arrogant merchant takes the family of a poor peddler to court and learns a lesson about the meaning of Hanukkah.

Though the celebration of Hanukkah has concluded for this year, this book's author offers a commentary at the end which should be shared: "In the darkness of winter when days are short and nights are long, it is good to be together with family and friends, singing Hanukkah melodies, by the light and warmth of the Menorah flames."

FOR AGES 9 & UP:

Crafts for Kwanzaa

By Kathy Ross, Illustrated by Sharon Lane Holm, The Millbrook Press, Brookfield, CT, 1994, $5.95.

Twenty simple craft projects are offered, from games and jewelry to giftwrap that children can make from everyday materials. Beginning December 26 and lasting seven days, Kwanzaa celebrates the lives and history of black people. Kwanzaa is a Swahili word meaning first fruits of the harvest.

Mole's Christmas

or Home Sweet Home

from *The Wind in the Willows*

By Kenneth Grahame, Illustrated by Beverly Gooding, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1982, $10.95.

In an adaptation from the 1908 classic, the reader finds Mole and Rat wandering through the Wild Woods, in search of Rat's home. The search leads instead to Mole's less bountiful abode, but a place nonetheless full of love.

FOR AGES 12 & UP

A Child's Christmas in Wales

By Dylan Thomas, Illustrated by Edward Ardizzone, David R. Godine Publishing, Boston, 1980, $10.95.

This 1954 story-poem has been published in various forms and there are recordings and video versions too. It should be read silently by individuals so that its images can be savored and it should be read-aloud to listeners by someone who will do justice to its humour and beauty.

A Christmas Carol in prose Being a Ghost Story of Christmas

By Charles Dickens, Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, Holiday House, New York, 1983, $14.95.

Dickens wrote this classic in 1843 about the miser who learns the true meaning of Christmas when three ghostly visitors review his past and foretell his future. Older readers should have the opportunity to enjoy the original version as much as the cinematic view as portrayed by the Muppets and Rizzo the Rat.

Books to Share

Here are some publications you may wish to order for family or friends. Place orders by calling GRAYSON BERNARD PUBLISHING at 1-800-925-7853

Help Your Child Read and Succeed

A Parents' Guide

By Carl B. Smith, Grayson Bernard Publishing, Grades K-6, 6"x9", 265 pp, $12.95.

Order No. A4-100-1019

Expert advice and skill-building activities help parents contribute to their children's reading success. Most importantly, parents discover how to give their child a good attitude and high motivation to read. Chapters also offer specific methods for improving reading comprehension, vocabulary, and speed. Includes parent/child activities, recommended book lists by grade-level and interesting, read-aloud techniques and stories to share.

My Galaxy of Memories, Feelings, and Dreams

By George and Marilee Tomek, Grayson Bernard Publishing, Grades 1-8, 8 1/2" x 11", 80 pp, $11.95. (Call for a discount on orders of 10 or more copies.)

Order No. A4-111-11634

This writing journal for kids and their families provides an opportunity for recording a year's worth of thoughts, activities and ideas. Family members take part as they fill in stories about their lives and share their thoughts. *My Galaxy* is both an educational tool and a family involvement activity, helping children grow as writers and thinkers while encouraging family participation and communication.

WORD PLAY

Do you know the way to Oyster Bay?

All the Junior and Senior Partners are heading home for the holidays. Can you help them match their cities with their states? Here's a hint: Consider your southern borders.

Cities*Anaheim*Peoria*Bristol*
Atlanta*Bloomington*Aloha*
Spencer*Crozet*Collinsville*Wells*
Muncie*Grants*Adelphi*RiverGrove*
Downingtown*Indianapolis*Faywood*
North Liberty*Ipswich*Oyster Bay*
El Cajon*Reynolds*Celina*Bronx*
Londonderry*Ramseur*Orlando*
Raleigh*Pittsboro*Pinckney*Niantic*
VanWert*Brisbane*Hartsdale*Cary*
San Francisco*Charlottesville*
Plainview*Earleton*South Windsor*
Greencastle*Greenwood*Greensboro
RockvilleCentre*Edgewater*Portage*
Gainesville*McAllen*Chardon*
West Bloomfield*Alachua*
Newberry*Jacksonville*Winnetka
Andrews*Crawfordsville*Salem*
Cosa Mesa*Reidsville*Salisbury*
Ft.Myers*Daly City*Anderson*
Chicago Heights*San Antonio*
Las Cruces*French Lick*Ft.Wayne
South Bend*Cedar Rapids*
Louisville*Fountain City*St.Louis*
Rochester*Rolling Prairie*Tipton*
Carmel*Batesville*Heltonville*
Evansville*Alexandria*Cincinnati*
Singapore*Laurel*Leesburg & more!

States: California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia. Countries: Australia, Singapore

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